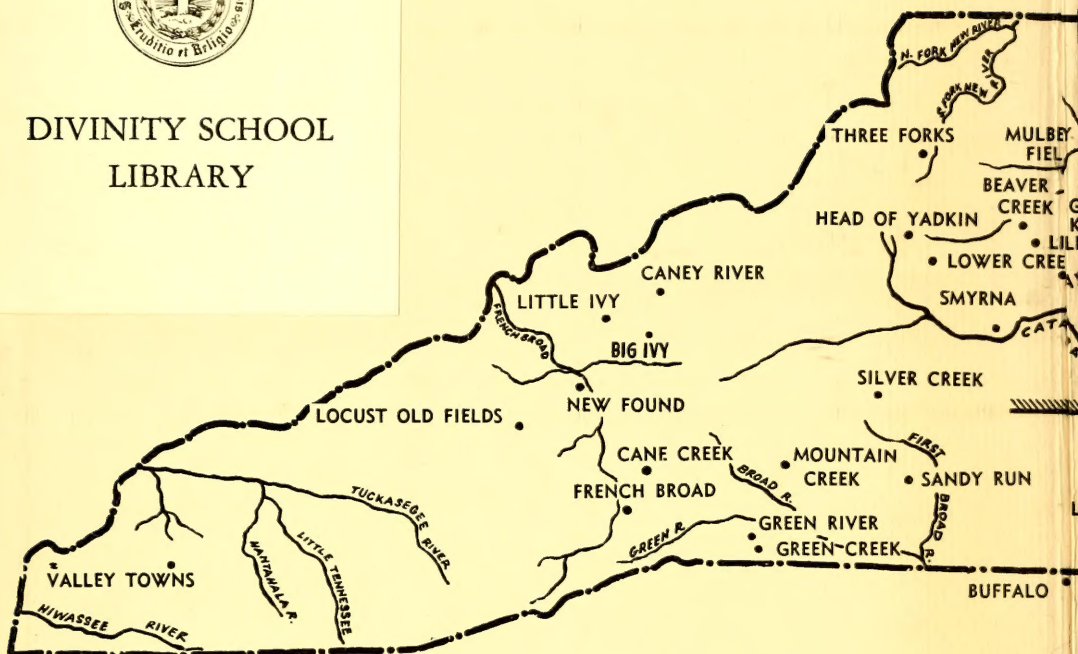




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## EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

County lines shown as of 1760

Most of the churches shown were organized after 1760.  
Area north of shaded line was Granville Tract.





*Edwards 1850*





# HISTORY OF NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

BY

GEORGE WASHINGTON PASCHAL

VOLUME II

RALEIGH  
THE GENERAL BOARD  
NORTH CAROLINA BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION  
1955

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## DEDICATION

This volume is affectionately  
dedicated to  
my daughter  
CATHERINE



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## PREFACE

In 1926, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina authorized the preparation and publication in as many volumes as necessary of a comprehensive history of North Carolina Baptists. In 1930 was published *History of North Carolina Baptists*, Volume I, 1633-1805. In that volume are prefatory statements intended to apply to the entire work, to which readers are referred and which are not repeated here.

This volume is designed as a proper continuation of Volume I, which, as indicated, roughly brought the history of the Baptists of North Carolina down to about 1805, but which was related chiefly to the eastern half of the state. In the present volume, the chief concern is the development of Baptists in the western part of North Carolina where the settlements and development, civil and religious, were a half-century later than in the east. In this western portion religious history, and specifically Baptist history, was influenced by economic and political development, social customs, and the national heritages of the peoples, just as was religious history in the east. But it was slower.

Perhaps nowhere do we have a better demonstration of the difference in religious and moral growth of the populations east and west than in the circular letters which were prepared for the associations. For that reason, and because they are a valuable repository of Baptist doctrines, some portion of this volume has been devoted to them and their history, which begins with the first Baptist association in America, the Philadelphia. We find provision for them in the constitutions of the North Carolina associations with the exception of Sandy Creek, which did not provide for their publication until 1805.

## PREFACE

Because of their historical value and their rarity we have reproduced in the appendix two early lists of Baptist churches in North Carolina. The first is that found in Morgan Edwards' *Materials*; the second is from Asplund's *Baptist Register*.

It is hardly necessary to observe that much about the Baptists of North Carolina remains to be told, much essential to a full understanding of Baptist development in the state during the past century. Among the topics remaining to be discussed are the formation of certain associations and the discontinuance of others; the withdrawal of the Negro Baptists after 1865 to form churches and associations of their own; the development of interest in Sunday schools; the contribution of Baptists to educational progress in the state; orphanages; missions—state, foreign and associational; publications; the State Board and the Corresponding Secretaries; Ridgecrest; *etc.*

Finally, I wish to acknowledge my great debt to the many historians who have preceded me. In instances where original records have been destroyed they have performed invaluable service in preserving data which have been incorporated into this story. Without their help a connected account of the Baptists in the section under consideration would have been impossible.

GEORGE W. PASCHAL

Wake, Forest, N. C.  
October, 1955



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## I

### EARLY BAPTISTS IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

Our former account has been devoted for the most part to the story of the rise and progress of the Baptists of eastern North Carolina. In what follows it is my purpose to tell the equally interesting and no less important story of the like development of the Baptists in all other sections of the State, with the hope that I may be able to remove any just reason for the frequent complaint that our North Carolina Baptist historians have given no connected account of Baptist work except in the east.

In beginning this second section it is well to repeat what I have already said: Baptists do not live to themselves nor labor to themselves. Their aims and attainments are modified by the social, political, educational, economic, occupational and religious condition of the people among whom they live. Accordingly, in a preliminary chapter or two I am giving some account of these things; though many of my statements do not directly concern Baptists, yet they do constitute a background necessary for a correct understanding of Baptist work in this section.

By western North Carolina as used in this account is meant that part of the State west of a north-and-south line running near the eastern line of the present counties of Rockingham, Guilford and Randolph from the Virginia line to the South Carolina line, the southern portion of which formed the eastern line of Anson County when it was erected

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

in 1750, while the northern portion of this line became the eastern boundary of Rowan County when it was cut off from Anson County in 1753. The east-and-west line between these two counties extended along what is now the northern boundaries of the counties of Moore, Montgomery, Stanly, Cabarrus and Mecklenburg, and indefinitely to the west, and to the east to the Atlantic Ocean, being the southern boundary line of the lands of Earl Granville. Thus this line divided western North Carolina in those early days into two distinct and separate parts, a southern and a northern, the Anson County section being outside the Granville Tract, and the Rowan section being within it. On this account their development was different, and that in the southern section earlier.

This may be better understood from the following statement. Rowan County, as originally laid out in 1753, was the western part of Earl Granville's Tract, which tract extended from the Virginia line south to the east-and-west line already described, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, as sometimes claimed, certainly to the western boundary of North Carolina and beyond.

It was assigned to Earl Granville as his one-eighth part of the magnificent domain of Carolina granted by King Charles II of England in the amended charter of 1665 to the Lords Proprietors, when in 1728 he, Earl Granville, refused to join with the seven other Lords Proprietors in selling their interests to the King. As one may see from a map of North Carolina, this Granville tract contained considerably more than half the land area of the present North Carolina, and included the early settlements of the east and much of the lands to the west best fitted for agriculture which, owing to their elevation, were relatively free from malaria and other diseases from which the settlers of the eastern part of the Province constantly suffered. However,

## IN WESTERN CAROLINA

the settlers in the east had the advantage of easy communication by water with the outside world, and the other colonies along the Atlantic seaboard north and south, and with England, and had greater facilities for trade and readier markets for their products, advantages which the settlers on the eastern part of the Granville Tract enjoyed.

For these reasons, until about 1750, the expansion of population of North Carolina westward was very slow. In the year 1746, when the commissioners appointed to survey the Granville line reached Haw River, near the present town of Moncure, they left off because, as they reported, there were no settlers to the west from whom they might obtain supplies. In the same year Matthew Rowan reported that he had found not more than 100 men able to bear arms in all the Province west of a line running north and south near the site of the present city of Durham. In the next few years, however, the western expansion had begun and by 1753 the number of fighting men in this same territory had increased to 3,000.<sup>1</sup>

In the earlier years nearly all this expansion to the west was in the region to the south of the Granville Tract due to the fact that owing to the negligence of Earl Granville no provision was made for sale to settlers of any of his lands in the west. For years after coming into possession of his Tract he maintained no office for the sale of his lands, and when he had appointed agents, according to Colonel William L. Saunders, "their extortions, exactions and oppressions were almost unendurable, causing the people to rise up more than once against them; these agents getting a fee for their services, sometimes induced two or more parties to make entries for the same pieces of land and engaged in other malpractices, which according to the report of the General Assembly of 1755 'greatly retarded the settlement

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<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, V, p. 24.



## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

of that part of the Province of which his Lordship is proprietor'." <sup>2</sup>

It was in the region to the south of the Granville Tract, in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties of today, that the first important settlement in the western part of North Carolina was made. Since that settlement has had a large influence on the religious life of the state, and in particular for many years limited and modified the development of Baptists in that section, some account of it is given here, preliminary to a fuller statement in another chapter.

In telling of these settlements Foote says: <sup>3</sup>

Scattered settlements were made along the Catawba, from Beattie's to Mason's Ford, some time before the country became the object of immigration to any considerable extent, probably about the year 1740. As the extent and fertility of the beautiful prairies became known, the Scotch Irish, seeking for settlements, began to follow the traders' path, and join the adventurers in this southern and western frontier. By 1745, the settlements, in what is now Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties, were numerous; and about 1750, and onward for a few years, the settlements grew dense for a frontier, and were uniting themselves into congregations for the purpose of enjoying the ministrations of the gospel in the Presbyterian form. The foundations for Sugar Creek, Hopewell, Steel Creek, New Providence, Poplar Tent, Rocky River Centre, and Thyatira were laid almost simultaneously.

Of these churches all except Rocky River Centre were in what is now Mecklenburg County. Foote states also that as early as 1746 small settlements of Presbyterians had begun in that part of the Granville Tract which is now Rowan and Iredell counties, but adds that such settlements consisted only "of a family or group of families," due to the fact that offices had not yet been opened for the sale of land in this part of the Granville Tract. It is evident that nearly all the early settlements of the Presbyterians were in the region to the south, and after 1750, says Foote,

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<sup>2</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, V, lv f, 299 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Sketches of North Carolina*, 201 f.

## IN WESTERN CAROLINA

"family after family, group after group, of those of the Presbyterian faith, came and settled in the region of which Sugar Creek (in the environs of Charlotte) is the center." Thus from the beginning of the settlements the Presbyterians became predominant in this section, a predominance which they maintained, almost to the exclusion of other denominations—certainly of the Baptists—for a full century, and to a lesser degree until this day.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until June, 1833, that the first Baptist church was constituted in Charlotte. This was a weak church, consisting of eleven members dismissed from Flint Hill Baptist Church, twelve miles from Charlotte across the line in York County, South Carolina. It did not prosper and after about twelve years passed out of existence. The first per-

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<sup>4</sup>The following extracts from an article, "Early Baptist Efforts in Charlotte," by Dr. T. J. Taylor, in the *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, for July, 1899, pp. 169-181, indicate how late the Baptists were in beginning and developing their work in this section.

First in regard to Flint Hill Church, page 170: "Evidently Elder Rooker's purpose in moving was that he might preach the gospel and establish Baptist churches in this inviting field; for almost as soon as he was located, he with the assistance of Rev. Abraham Marshall, of Georgia, constituted on the first day of May, 1792, Flint Hill Church, which although in York County, S. C., is only twelve miles from Charlotte, with which place the Flint Hill neighborhood has always been closely identified. . . . Although Flint Hill was from the first a prosperous church, and had labored to establish churches in other communities, yet for forty years no effort seems to have been made to organize a Baptist church in Charlotte."

Now with reference to Baptist work in Charlotte: p. 171 f.: "In the summer of 1832, Rev. James C. Furman, then known as the boy preacher, afterwards the distinguished president of Furman University, and Mr. Barnes, a young Baptist preacher, were conducting a series of meetings in Camden, S. C. Col. Thomas Boyd, a member of Flint Hill Church, who resided within a few miles of Charlotte, was in Camden on business during this meeting. At his earnest solicitation the young preachers consented to go to Charlotte and hold a meeting. . . . Accordingly at the close of the meeting in Camden the young preachers went to Charlotte and commenced a meeting which lasted for three weeks. . . . At first the meetings were held in the Presbyterian church, but it soon became necessary, in order to accommodate the large congregations which attended, to erect a stand in the yard. Many came from twenty and thirty miles, and encamped on the ground. Dr. T. H. Pritchard observes that 'as many as two hundred people were converted in these meetings.' Many of the converts joined the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, and the membership of Flint Hill was also increased by this meeting. At the close of the meeting some of the converts requested to be baptized then and there. In accordance with this request just before the departure of the young preach-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

manent Baptist church was constituted in Charlotte in 1855. About the same time as the Presbyterians settled in the Charlotte section, many of them found homes on the Granville lands in the eastern section in the region to the east and southeast of the present city of Greensboro, where it seems they had little difficulty in buying lands. Though somewhat later in developing, the settlement here was in reality a part of the movement that brought them to Sugar Creek (Charlotte). Here, too, for a century or more the Presbyterians had predominance. It was after 1850 that the Baptists had their first church in Greensboro.

In the Granville Tract, that part of it which in 1753 was erected into Rowan County, the early religious development was different, and in some respects in North Carolina unique in religious history. This uniqueness consisted in the fact that the first important religious group to find

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ers for their homes in South Carolina, James C. Furman 'baptized nine young men.' This was the first baptism ever witnessed in Charlotte. . . . In consequence of this great revival, a Baptist church in Charlotte became not only a possibility, but a necessity. Therefore, in June, 1833, ten persons were dismissed from Flint Hill Church for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church. . . . This feeble church had neither a prosperous nor a long existence. Deaths and removals greatly weakened it, and a want of harmony between two prominent families resulted in its death after a heroic struggle for existence for about twelve years. . . . In 1853 or 1854 Rev. R. B. Jones, a missionary of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention, established a mission in Charlotte. . . . Brother Jones was eminently successful in his work, and early in 1855, with the assistance of Dr. T. H. Pritchard, organized in the courthouse Beulah Baptist Church. The late Maj. Benjamin Morrow kindly gave this church a lot on the corner of Seventh and B Streets, on which was erected a neat brick house at a cost of one thousand eight hundred dollars. Perhaps the largest contribution to this building was made by Mr. Matthew A. Edwards, a wealthy member of Flint Hill Church, who resided some four miles east of Charlotte. This house was occupied on the 7th day of October, 1855, which was Saturday; a council consisting of Elder Peter Nicholson, brethren etc. . . . met in the new house, and after a statement by the pastor, Rev. R. B. Jones proceeded to dissolve the Beulah Baptist Church and constituted the Charlotte Baptist Church of Christ. Rev. R. B. Jones continued to serve this church a part of his time as missionary until January, 1857, when he became the settled pastor. He, however, resigned the following December for the purpose of finishing his course at Wake Forest College. . . . In January, 1858, Rev. R. H. Griffith became the pastor of the church . . . and for eleven long years laid himself with all his gifts and attainments a willing sacrifice upon the altar for the establishment and building up of the Baptist cause in that city."

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their homes in the western part of the Granville Tract came as members of a religious colony and occupied a considerable area of land, 100,000 acres previously selected and purchased for their sole occupation and control in any way not inconsistent with the general laws of the Province. This group, of course, was that generally known as the Moravians, but in North Carolina Provincial law known as the Protestant Episcopal Brethren, and in religious history as *Unitas Fratrum*, the United Brethren. Since they were the first to begin religious work in this section, and their presence and activities greatly modified and influenced the development of other religious groups, our account of the Baptists in this section, and in particular west of the Yadkin, begins with the Moravians.<sup>5</sup>

In May, 1749, an act of the English Parliament, approved by the King, declared the United Brethren an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church, and entitled to all the rights and immunities of the Church of England, which act was to prove of no little advantage to them in the American colonies, and in particular in those colonies in which the Church of England was established by law and non-Conformists did not have the equal protection of the law and

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<sup>5</sup> Materials for the history of the Moravians in North Carolina is full and complete. First there is the Diary of Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenburg, who made a trip of exploration through this part of the Granville Tract in 1752-53, in search of lands on which to establish colonies of members of his church. This Diary in whole or in part has been frequently published, but most conveniently with little abridgement in the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, V, pp. 1-14. On pages 1144-1163 of the same volume is found the *Early History of the Moravians in North Carolina*, supposedly by Bishop Reichel, first published in an appendix to Volume I of Martin's *History of North Carolina*, and published as a separate volume in 1857. Of the very greatest value is the monumental work, *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, drawn from the archives in Salem, translated and edited by Miss Adelaide L. Fries—seven volumes in 1952—and published by the North Carolina Historical Commission. "They afford wonderfully interesting material for a study of events, conditions, the habits of life and thought of bygone days." While these records are chiefly concerned with the Moravians, incidentally they contain a great wealth of information on many phases of the life in North Carolina in the period covered. From these volumes one learns much about Baptists of this section not obtainable elsewhere.



## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

sometimes were made to suffer restrictions and even persecution. In addition, owing to their peculiar tenets, the Moravians were exempted, on the payment of a reasonable fee, from personal military service, and permitted to make affirmation instead of oath in cases in which the laws prescribed an oath for others. Later, in North Carolina, the county where their colony settled was made a separate parish and put under their control, and given the name Dobbs.

The Brethren had an earlier American colony at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. In the year 1751, Bishop August Gottlieb Spangenburg, who for several years had resided at Bethlehem, bargained with Earl Granville for 100,000 acres of land of his choice in any portion of the Granville Tract, for a Moravian settlement. In 1752 Spangenburg came with some others of the Brethren from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to Edenton, North Carolina, which they reached on September 9, and were courteously received by Lord Granville's agent, Francis Corbin, Esq. Following the suggestion of Mr. Corbin that so much land of the desired quality, certainly in one tract or contiguous tracts, could not be found in the eastern portion of Earl Granville's Tract, Spangenburg and his company remained at Edenton only until September 17, 1752, when, accompanied by William Churton, Lord Granville's surveyor, and his assistants, they set out for "Back of the Colony," that is, "west to the Blue Mountains," with the hope of finding a tract or tracts of lands not hitherto surveyed for others, and suitable for their purpose.

Engrossingly interesting is Bishop Spangenburg's account in his *Diary* of his journey. His group went first along the Trading Path near the sites of the present cities of Greensboro and Salisbury, through the southern portion of Earl Granville's land, and on to the Catawba which they reached on October 27, 1752, and which lay 400 miles from Edenton. Here lived a Scotchman of good name, Andrew



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Lambert. Until this time they had seen "at least one house a day," but Lambert's was the last; nearest him to the east, twenty miles away, lived Jonathan Weiss, or Perrot, a hunter, who like others, lived near the Indians for the purpose of trade in skins and furs. From this time, going eighty miles further west, they saw no white man, but in all this region the woods were full of Indian hunters, Catawbas who once were the sole occupants of this region, Cherokees, recent comers to this section, and their kinsmen, Senecas, who had come from New York not only to kill game but to capture Catawbas and carry them back to New York to serve them as slaves. Through an error of their guide, after crossing the Blue Ridge with much difficulty, they found themselves on the New River and as far north as the site of Boone, having passed through a region some seventy or eighty miles from the last settlement, a region, says Spangenburg, that had "perhaps been seldom visited since the creation of the world." From Boone they made their way over the intervening divide to the headwaters of the Yadkin, and then on down that river to the Mulberry Fields, near the site of Wilkesboro. In all their long journey after leaving Lambert's they had not seen a house or white person except those in their company. During the short period that the lands had been for sale to the east of the Blue Ridge, many of the best tracts had been surveyed for prospective settlers. On this account Spangenburg found it difficult to obtain such lands as he desired—fertile, level bottom lands in large tracts. In all his long journey he had approved and had surveyed only six or eight tracts, ranging in size from 1,000 to 6,000 acres, on the tributaries of the upper Catawba River and on New River, in the territories of the present counties of Alexander, Catawba, Burke, Caldwell, and Watauga, none of which did he retain after finding lands more suitable for his purpose in large tracts on the Yadkin at Mulberry Fields and lower down

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that river. At Mulberry Fields they entered a tract on both sides of the river, about 4,000 acres, and later a small tract on the south side, separated from the other by lands owned by Morgan Bryant. They had come to Mulberry Fields on December 14, 1752. Seemingly because no other desirable lands were available on the west (south) of the stream, about the end of the year 1752 the party of Moravians and the surveyor came to the east of the Yadkin and encamped on Muddy Creek, near the present town of Clemmons. Here they found a body of land which they thought the best left in North Carolina; to Spangenburg "it seemed to have been reserved by the Lord for the Brethren."

It consisted of fourteen pieces, all adjoining, containing more than 73,000 acres, about ten miles long and eleven wide. Later they secured two other tracts, one to the north of 16,000 acres, and one to the south of about 9,000 acres, making a total of 98,985 acres, for which, on abandoning permanently the first eight tracts surveyed, they obtained a deed on August 7, 1753. The total purchase price of all was five hundred pounds (about \$2,500.00); the annual rental was three shillings a hundred acres, making a total in our money of about \$750. In 1754 Earl Granville deeded to the Brethren the two tracts at Mulberry Fields surveyed for Spangenburg, making no charge to compensate for the barren lands in the Wachau (Wachovia) tract centered around the present city of Winston-Salem.

Spangenburg and party had their survey completed and departed for Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, on January 13, 1753, O. S. They were in possession or soon to come into possession of more than 100,000 acres for which Spangenburg had bargained.

The Moravians did not delay in occupying their new domain. On November 17, of the same year, 1753, eleven single Brethren sent as pioneers from Bethlehem, took up their residence, to the east of the Yadkin at a place which

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they called Bethabara, but now called Old Town, five miles to the northwest of Winston-Salem. In 1759, was established Bethania, about three miles to the northwest and nearer the river. Later, in 1766, in accord with the purpose held from the first settlement, a central town was begun, and to this was given the name of Salem. Later still other towns—Friedburg, Friedland, and Hope—were begun, to furnish homes for the increasing number of settlers. The inhabitants of these towns, all Germans and Moravians, had increased in 1762 to 148 souls, 74 each in Bethabara and Bethania; in 1766 the total number was 217. In 1772 the congregation at Salem numbered 120; that of Bethabara 54, that of Bethania 105; the communicants outside towns numbered 50—18 married people and 32 children. The total was 329. For the remainder of the history of the Moravians in North Carolina readers are referred to Miss Fries' *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* and the other volumes on the subject. In our further account only so much of this history as is needed for an understanding of the Baptist history of the State will be given.

Another religious development in the extreme eastern part of Rowan County, was that of the Society of Friends at New Garden. Of this some account was given in the first volume of this work, in which also was given some account of the work of Baptist missionaries at the Jersey Settlement and at Abbott's Creek, both east of the Yadkin. In what follows will be found an account of the religious development, primarily that of the Baptists, in western North Carolina, beginning with that part of western North Carolina in the Granville Tract to the west of the Moravian settlement.

We have seen that in 1752 Bishop Spangenburg found very few white men in the region to the west of the Yadkin, only one house a day along the Trading Path to the east of the Catawba River, and in his further circuit of travel, to the New River at Boone, and down the Yadkin, not

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finding a white settler until he came to the house of Owen, a tenant on the land of Morgan Bryant, sixty miles from the nearest settlement.

After this time, however, settlers from all directions, learning that the Granville lands were for sale, came in a constant stream in large numbers to this region. Expansion of the settlements to the east had already brought a few families to the neighborhood of the lands bought for the Moravians east of the Yadkin. On their journey from Bethlehem the first Moravian settlers found a family or two south of the Virginia line. After this the influx of settlers into the northern part of the Granville lands was very rapid. In a postscript to Spangenburg's *Diary* for September 25, 1752, but evidently written some years later, he states that toward the west, nearer the mountains, many families were moving in from Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Jersey and even New England, and in the one year in which he was writing more than 400 families had come with horses and wagons and cattle. When the first Moravian settlers were on their way to Wachovia in November, 1753, they found crossing their lands and leading to the Yadkin a new road which doubtless had been made to serve those who did not wish to go as far south as the old Trading Path.

It is further to be observed that it is evident that, except for the Quakers and Moravians, the new settlers did not belong to any one national or religious group. They were not predominantly Scotch-Irish or German; for the most part they were English-speaking people who were searching for new homes. Dr. G. W. Greene, an able scholar, a descendant of one of the first families to settle in this region, says: "The first settlements were made about the middle of the last century. The early settlers were nearly all Baptists. They came from several directions. Some of the earliest came from Pennsylvania and Virginia."<sup>6</sup> Many of these

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<sup>6</sup> G. W. Greene in *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 64.



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new settlers doubtless came from eastern North Carolina and the adjacent parts of Virginia. Such was Morgan Bryant who had large holdings on the Yadkin and seemingly a mill on that stream. How varied were the elements of the population and how widely scattered when the Moravians began their settlement may be seen in the footnote.<sup>7</sup> At this time the settlers along the Virginia frontier were in constant danger from incursions of Indians, and to escape this peril both before and after the declaration of the French and Indian War, 1755-63, many Virginia families were crossing the border into Western North Carolina. In three or four years there was a great transformation and white settlers were numerous where none were found before. A census made late in 1754 showed that in Rowan County there were 996 men fit for military duty, a larger number than in any other county except Edgecombe, where there were 1,317, while in Anson County including all Western North Carolina south of Rowan there were 790. Of taxables in the same year Rowan County had 1,116 white men, being surpassed only by two counties, Edgecombe with 1,611 and Bertie with 1,220, while Anson had only 810.

Considering the wide extent of the country the inhabitants of the Rowan County of this period were very few. With true pioneer spirit the families, each for itself, were finding their own land, usually purchasing it, and settling on it. But these scattered settlers had not altogether escaped

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<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 78: Altem's House, eleven miles south of the Dan; the abandoned house of a German who had gone to the Yadkin; p. 81: Nov. 21, 1753. Seven miles to an Irishman to buy corn; Nov. 24, 1753. Two men looking for strayed horses, moved last year to Yadkin; p. 83: An Irish squatter with nine children on the land of the Brethren; p. 85: December 20, 1753: To Yadkin for meal and corn; p. 85f. December 24, 1753: To Mr. Hikki, 60 miles away on Smith River to get salt. The "Bethabara Diary" for the year 1754, has many references to the neighbors of the Moravians, some eighty miles to the east on Haw River, and one eighteen miles away beyond the Yadkin. The services of their physician, Dr. Kalberlahn, 33 years old, on March 30, 1754, were in great demand; some patients came great distances to see him; he visited the patients near him. The road to the Cape Fear lay through forests for the first 40 miles.



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the peril of being murdered by Indians on coming to North Carolina, and this was well known. No Indians at this time occupied villages east of the Blue Ridge; Spangenburg saw only the remains of Indian villages and forts, which he supposed had been abandoned for fifty years. The only Indians he saw were hunters seeking game, and evidently they had not abandoned their hunting rights, and had with yearly fires ruined forest lands along the Catawba River, seemingly to make them a better habitat for wild animals. The Indians had lost their lands, he said, as a result of a war with the whites, and on this account were resentful and ready to kill the cattle of whites living on the fringes of the settlements and to murder the settlers themselves when they had a chance.

Bishop Spangenburg is perhaps wrong in his statement that the Indians had lost this territory to the whites in consequence of a war; the name of the river, Catawba, would indicate that this region once belonged to the Indians of that tribe, and it was they and not the Cherokees who had lost it. At this time the Catawbas were shut up in a very small territory then thought to be all in Anson County, North Carolina, but partly in South Carolina, and numbered only 240 warriors, whereas the Cherokees occupied a wide stretch of country, extending from the Savannah to Kentucky, but with no villages east of the Catawba River and the Blue Ridge. In 1755 they were thought to number 2,390 warriors. They claimed the hunting fields of the conquered Catawbas for themselves, and though they had no villages of their own there they resented the intrusions of the whites. In the southern portions the settlements were too large and their inhabitants too numerous to be attacked, but further north they made it hard for the scattered settlers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> In 1755, the table of the various Indian tribes, as shown in the *Colonial Records*, V, p. 320 f., is as follows: Catawbas, 240; Cherokees, 2,390 (mostly

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In the beginning of the French and Indian war in 1754, the Cherokees were won to the side of the English colonists, and sent to their aid in Virginia and further north several companies of their braves. In the records of the Moravians for these years there is frequent reference to their passage as they went and as they returned, always feared but sometimes well behaved. With their knowledge of Indian warfare and of woodcraft their services were welcome and valuable.

However, further back in the settlements, in those troublous times the Indians were more excited than usual and were bold to show their resentment against the whites who were intruding on their hunting grounds on the Catawba, the Yadkin, and the New River. Marauding bands of ten or a dozen roved the woods and when they found an unprotected family and were in the mood for it, they murdered them and seized what they could carry off. This condition prevailed until the Indians were decisively defeated in the Cherokee war of 1757-61. In these years, when the marauders, who were troublesome chiefly in the hunting season, late summer and fall, had departed, some of the settlers would return to their mountain homes, but many left for good. In April, 1760, Col. Hunt reported that at least half the inhabitants had fled from the county—Rowan—and settled in the counties to the east. In 1755, the construction of Fort Dobbs on Third Creek, sixteen miles west of Salisbury, was authorized by the Provincial Assembly and became a place of refuge for the more thickly settled neighborhoods of this section. Further north the whites had to plan for their own protection and built several small forts, one of which was Fort Defiance in Wilkes County.<sup>9</sup>

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outside of North Carolina); Tuscaroras in Bertie County, 100 warriors and 201 women and children, a total of 301; Chowan County Indians, men, women and children 7; Granville County, 14 Sapona warriors and 14 women, 28, and children; Meherrins, 7 or 8 fighting men in Northampton County; and 8 or 10 Mattamuskeets and as many Banks Indians.

<sup>9</sup> Ashe, *History of North Carolina*, I, p. 299 f. Many families had made their homes veritable castles, fortifying their dwellings and outhouses within

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The perilous situation of the settlers is shown in the records of the Moravians. Stories of Indian atrocities came to Bethabara almost daily for a considerable period after the middle of July, 1755.<sup>10</sup> Characteristic are the stories that follow.

On July 22, 1755, a Dunkard (or "Bearded Man") who had settled on the New River, came with his entire family to Bethabara, with the story that he had left his home because of the Indians, and had made a long circuitous route by the Roanoke to avoid them; some several families had been attacked, some of the members being kept as captives and others murdered; so far as he knew, the captives and murdered numbered twenty-eight; on the night before he left, the family of one of his neighbors, three miles from his home, had been murdered. When he reached the Roanoke he found other refugees; he had brought his family to Town Creek, twelve miles from Bethabara, intending to settle there, but he found the people there and, in particular, Mr. Altem, the first friend of the Moravians in North Carolina, in fear of the Indians, preparing to move to the Haw River. That very night Indians or brigands attacked the house of a Mr. Benner, whose home was not very far from Bethabara, while the master was away from home searching for stray horses, but his wife and children escaped to Bethabara. The next day a man came from the Little Yadkin, and said the people on the Little Yadkin were planning to get together for protection. On July 25, the younger Mr. Guest, a man of good standing living at Mulberry Fields, and the brother-in-law of Mr. Benner, brought word that the entire settle-

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enclosures of palisades, always having a strong spring providing a supply of pure water for the family and their stock. Often the houses had port holes in the corners commanding all approaches. In the lot were keen-scented, alert hounds, ready to give the alarm, and sometimes they had fierce and dangerous bear dogs, ready to take part when summoned by the bark of the hounds.

<sup>10</sup> *Records of Moravians in North Carolina*, I, 133, 135, 141, 158, 166, 188, 206, 209, 227, 229 f., 235 ff.

ment around them were preparing to move, they knew not where.

After a year or two, though the marauding Indians had doubtless checked the flow of immigrants into this section, and had caused many to abandon their homes, many settlers remained and showed such ability to protect themselves as to gain the respect of the roving bands of Indians, whose atrocities were less frequently reported.

This condition continued until early in 1759, when the Cherokee tribes, and the Creeks, joined in open war against the whites, seemingly with the ambitious purpose of regaining possession of all the lands occupied by the whites in western North Carolina. Soon they had passed through the defiles of the mountains, and were attacking the settlements. Towards the south they made little progress and left off altogether when they were repulsed in their attack on Fort Dobbs, February 27, 1760, but they did much havoc in other sections, laying waste all the scattered settlements on the head waters of the Catawba and the Yadkin and the New rivers. However, seemingly taught by their experience at Fort Dobbs, they did not risk their lives in assaults on forts and other fortified places of refuge. These they passed by, hoping to make an easy prey of the Moravian settlements and others further east, which they expected to find unprotected. Of the fear and trepidation to the east of the Yadkin one may gain some idea from the fact that at this time Elder John Gano, who was serving as missionary of the Baptist Church at Charleston to the church at the Jersey Settlement, left with his family for Philadelphia. The Moravians, however, already had set a watch, and as the Indians came nearer, in March, 1760, they doubled the watch, finding authority therefor in these texts from *Nehemiah*: "Neither Nehemiah nor his brethren put off their clothes (Neh. 4:23), but prayed as they watched," and "they appointed watches of the inhabitants"



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(Neh. 7:3), which were the texts set for the church services for February 28 and March 9. And what is more, they armed these watches. In addition, the numerous refugees in Bethania were well armed and ready to fight, with the good will of the Brethren. Accordingly, when the Indians had come and, as revealed by their footprints often found the mornings following near the houses of the unsuspecting Brethren, had spied out their town, they never made any attack, and the watchmen set by the Brethren never had to shoot. In fact, the Red Men of the forest seemed to stand in awe of the strange people whose watchmen warned of danger by blowing horns, and who rang bells, in reality for morning and evening worship, but, as the Indians supposed, to give notice that the Indians were coming, and who in the wooded part of the road from Bethabara to Bethania rode their big, fat horses "like the devil."<sup>11</sup>

Early in April, 1760, a small force of soldiers arrived under the command of Colonel Hunt, and the Indians withdrew to the west, and never again seriously threatened the inhabitants east of the Yadkin, although to the west their marauding bands continued to rove until peace was made with them at the end of the year 1761.

After a measure of safety was secured, the tide of settlers set in again, and the people to the west of the Yadkin went about their usual tasks of clearing new-grounds and building houses and barns, making hay and going to mill. The Indians, however, did not give up their resentment against the intruding pioneers. On the fringes of the advancing settlements on the New River they had become so troublesome after a year that the settlers built neighborhood forts as places of refuge from them, and in July, 1763, the Cherokees again declared war.<sup>12</sup> Though this war was soon

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<sup>11</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, pp. 227 f.; Reichel, *Moravians in North Carolina*, pp. 49 f.

<sup>12</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, pp. 272, 273.



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settled by the superior forces of the whites, it was only one of the many conflicts caused by the encroachments of the white settlers on the Indian lands which continued for more than a half a century. They had little regard even for the boundary line run in 1767 by agreement with Governor Tryon and the Cherokee chiefs, from Tryon Mountain in the present county of Polk to Chiswell's mines on New River, in Virginia, crossing the State just west of the Blue Ridge about forty miles west of Morganton. This region west of the Yadkin was filling up with settlers in the years from the close of the Cherokee war in 1761 till the opening of the Revolution in 1776, and even during the period of the war, with little abatement. Before the erection of Guilford County in 1770-71, Rowan County had become one of the most populous counties in the State, and at this time its population was far the largest. In 1766 it already had 3,059 taxable persons, more than any other county in the Province except Orange, which had 3,973. The next year of the total 30,730 white taxables, Rowan County was estimated to have 3,000 and Orange 3,573; no other county had more than 1,600.<sup>13</sup>

At the opening of the Revolutionary War, the population of North Carolina was estimated to be 300,000, of whom about one-third were in the western half of the State, and for the most part whites, the large slave holdings being in such eastern counties as Brunswick, New Hanover and Halifax.<sup>14</sup> In the Granville district west of Halifax County, the slaves were comparatively very few. The Scotch-Irish who settled in what are now the counties of Orange, Guilford, Rowan, and Iredell, brought few slaves with them. The same is true of the Quakers whose settlements were central at Cane Creek in the present county of Alamance

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<sup>13</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VII, pp. 288 f., 540 f.

<sup>14</sup> See the list of taxables, white and colored, by counties, *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VII, p. 540 f.

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and at New Garden in Guilford, with smaller settlements on the upper Yadkin; it was true also of the Germans in their several settlements, one in a stretch of country lying between the present towns of Siler City and Burlington, and two other colonies in the territory between the Yadkin and the Catawba. In Wachovia there was only a rare slave. Doubtless most of those who moved at this period from eastern North Carolina to the west of the Yadkin were also non-slave-holders; in all probability one controlling reason of their moving was their desire to escape from social and political conditions which large slave-holdings and large plantations engendered; they were seeking homes where there were other noble men than slave-holders; they wanted freedom from such things.

### *Distribution of Population*

At this point a general statement of the character and distribution of the population of North Carolina in the section west of Granville County will, I hope, be helpful for a better understanding of the later religious development in it.

In the first volume of this work, pages 255 following, the general characteristics of the Quakers and the extent of their settlements in and around Cane Creek and New Garden have been given and need not be repeated here. In the next quarter of a century they had formed a smaller and more scattered settlement at Westfield in Surry County, and there were numerous Quakers among the settlers on the borders of the present counties of Yadkin and Iredell. Though the Quakers have been underestimated and even ignored by historians, it deserves to be emphasized that during all the colonial period, they were second only to the Baptists in number; they had more congregations that assembled every first day for worship than either the Episcopalians or the Presbyterians; their discipline called for cor-

rect moral living, and in their schools they gave instruction to young and old of no mean order. They were industrious and frugal. Everything around their homes was well ordered; their houses, though small and usually built of logs, were well constructed, and their barns and cribs also; they walled in the springs from which they got their water, and immediately below they built their springhouses, walled in with stone, and with a stone channel to carry the stream in which they placed their crocks of milk and their jars of cream for churning. Many of these remain to this day in Chatham County and other sections as monuments of the Quaker families who built them and enjoyed their use until in their repugnance at slavery they moved to Indiana or some other Free State in the days before the Civil War.

On the other hand, the Quakers had certain peculiarities which tended to make and keep them segregated from the other elements in the population. Their dress, both for men and women, boys and girls, was of formal cut, always the same, somber and with no touch of gayety that delights young people. They said "thee" and sometimes "thou" as a religious obligation. They did not say "January, February, March," but "First Month, Second Month, Third Month"; they did not say "Sunday, Monday, Tuesday," but "First Day, Second Day, Third Day." They did not say "Mister Smith and Mistress Smith," but called them, as well as their own men and women by their given names, "Hugh," "Roxie," "Isham," and the Gentile little boys who knew them often slyly did the same. When one of their male members was caught at a Gentile's house at meal time he would come to the table with his hat on his head, at which even well trained children could hardly keep their manners. They did not intermarry with their non-Quaker neighbors. It sometimes happened that a young man and young woman, only one of whom was a Quaker, fell in love at first sight, but for them to get married was difficult; a Quaker who married

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out of faith was expelled from the Society. But in some instances, as noted in Quaker church records, the party not a Quaker became a Quaker and the marriage was then made in due Quaker form.

The Quakers differed from their neighbors in another important respect; beginning with the visit of John Woolman to the Province in 1757, they gradually left off owning slaves, and before the end of the century the entire Society had become known for its anti-slavery attitude and its efforts to secure laws from the North Carolina General Assembly that would make the freeing of slaves easier.<sup>15</sup> In addition to all this it was generally reported that Quakers invited Negroes to their dinner tables and ate with them, a circumstance that in some communities had no little influence in causing them to be regarded as a separate people. Furthermore, they refused to serve as soldiers in the wars of the country. And so it came about, notwithstanding the general excellence of the Quaker colonists who came from Virginia and Pennsylvania and eastern North Carolina to settle at Cane Creek and New Garden and west of the Yadkin, they were regarded as a peculiar people, and were restricted in any efforts at proselytism, and those of them who had farms among slave-holding neighbors sold them and left the State.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The celebrated John Woolman was in North Carolina twice. His *Journal* indicates that to eradicate slavery was one of the strongest purposes of his life. In a letter to the monthly meetings of Cane Creek and New Garden he used these words: "I have been informed that there is a large number of Friends in our Parts, who have no Slaves; and in tender and most affectionate Love, I beseech you to keep clear of purchasing any." *Journal*, p. 63, Everyman's Library edition. For the effort of the Quakers to secure legislation in North Carolina more favorable to slaves, the reader is referred to Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, Chap. IX.

<sup>16</sup> Weeks, *Southern Quakers and Slavery*, pp. 103, 106, gives lists of names of families of Quakers who came to central North Carolina in the years 1751 and 1770; though they represent only the families who have since attained distinction, they are numerous. Says he, p. 107: "They represented some of the oldest and best Quaker families in Pennsylvania." But when migration from the North ceased at the outbreak of the Revolution, the



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Germans also in compact groups made settlements in central and western North Carolina; of these an account has been given in the first volume of this work.<sup>17</sup> Something further needs to be said about the various groups of Germans in central and western North Carolina.

The first of these was in that part of North Carolina which is now the eastern part of Guilford and the western part of Alamance and extending southward into Chatham and Randolph, where settlements of Germans began as early as 1750 and continued until the Revolution. All came either from or through Pennsylvania, usually in considerable companies. About the same time, possibly a few years later, other companies of these "Pennsylvania Dutch," according to Bernheim,<sup>18</sup> came and occupied lands to the eastward and westward of the Yadkin River; a few years later Scotch-Irish settlers formed settlements to the westward of the German settlers, and still later the descendants of these formed settlements in the western part of the State, with those of different nationalities remaining separate, "occupying strips of land across the State mostly in a south-westerly direction like so many strata of a geological formation." There were groups of Germans in the territory of the pres-

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expansion of the Quaker colonies and congregations ceased. "From that time," says Weeks, "the meetings were kept up by natural increase, not by new arrivals."

<sup>17</sup> P. 257 f. In the first volume no account was given of another German-speaking group who settled in the vicinity of New Bern. These were the Swiss and German Palatines, whom DeGraffenreid brought over late in the year 1710. Probably they had been reared Lutherans, but DeGraffenreid asked the Bishop of London to receive them into the Church of England, and in response the Bishop consented to do so, and to send them a minister who could read German. There is no evidence that such a minister was ever sent. After they had suffered from the Tuscarora War and had been robbed of their land they were scattered through Craven County and to the west and southwest and lost their native tongue and identity as a separate racial group. Bernheim, *German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, pp. 71-81; Hawks, *History of North Carolina*, II, pp. 530-532; *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, IV, pp. 868f., 954ff.

<sup>18</sup> Bernheim, *German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, pp. 151 f.

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ent Davidson, Rowan, Cabarrus, and later in Catawba counties.<sup>19</sup>

At first and in some respects for many years the Germans were segregated units in the population. Since they spoke only German it was necessary for them to live next to German neighbors. When they had come earlier, as they did to Guilford and Alamance, they found and occupied great stretches of vacant lands; their settlements were smaller in territorial extent in the Granville Tract generally, but considerable to the south and west of the Catawba River in Burke, Catawba and Lincoln counties. They retained their compact character. Partly because of knowing no English, but also because of their racial characteristics, they took little interest in political affairs. There is evidence, however, that some of them were resentful of the extortions of Edmund Fanning and other favorites of Governor Tryon, and some signed some of the Regulator petitions of protest.<sup>20</sup> But in general, since they were not able to read the laws which were written and expounded in English they were content to leave the English to enjoy them, while they lived peaceably under laws of their own in their own neighborhoods, and, "attending to their home interests, they surrounded themselves with well tilled farms, and adorned their premises with capacious barns and threshing floors."<sup>21</sup> For they were first of all farmers, each family on a farm of its own, "all industrious, economical, and thrifty farmers," says

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<sup>19</sup> Bernheim, *German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, p. 152 gives the following picture of them on their migration from Pennsylvania to North Carolina. "The Pennsylvania Germans journeyed in much the same manner as did the later colonists to the Western States, before railroads afforded a more speedy mode of transportation; every available article of house and farm use, capable of being stowed away in their capacious wagons, was taken with them; and then the cavalcade moved on, every able-bodied person on foot, women and children on bedding in the wagons, and cattle, sheep, and hogs driven before them; they traveled by easy stages . . . until they reached the land of their hopes and promises."

<sup>20</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VII, pp. 736f.

<sup>21</sup> Rumble, *History of Rowan County*, p. 45.

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Bernheim, who will have it that the Germans were the most industrious of all settlers who ever came to America.<sup>22</sup> Though they were farmers, many had other skills with which they served not only their fellow Germans but also the neighboring English-speaking communities; some had medical skills and were known far and wide as "Dutch Doctors," others were blacksmiths, wheelwrights, millwrights, carpenters, rivers of boards, harness-makers, and makers of winnowing fans, pullers of aching teeth, while some, both men and women, professed to be able to talk out fire and white-swellings and had much demand for their services from patients far and wide, German and English. The men had also, as they grew older, pronounced racial characteristics which tended to keep them separate from others; one of these was their beards which were grizzled and bushy, often thick and matted. These things, but most of all their inability to speak English, kept them separate and distinct for a generation or two. But they had no scruples about owning slaves, and did not forbid to marry outside their communion, and as soon as they were getting able to speak English the young people, English and German, were freely intermingling with one another and intermarrying. For the English young man the short waist and blue eyes and buxomness of the "Dutch" girl only rendered her the more attractive. Already before the Revolution they had secured preachers of their own faith, some Lutheran and some German Reformed, and were building churches, where for fifty years longer the services were in the German language.<sup>23</sup>

Though small, never in the colonial period numbering more than 500 in all their settlements, by far the most notable group of Germans in the Province were the Moravians, of whose settlements in Wachovia, something has been said

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<sup>22</sup> Bernheim, *German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, p. 153.

<sup>23</sup> In the first volume of this work, p. 258, Caruthers is quoted on the religious destitution of the Germans of Guilford and Alamance.

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above, and of whom there was a brief sketch in the first volume of this work.<sup>24</sup> For interesting accounts of them the reader is referred to the histories of Reichel, Clewell, and Miss Fries, and especially to the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, assembled and edited by Miss Adelaide L. Fries, and published in eight volumes by the North Carolina Historical Commission. A few important facts may here be stated about them.

For several years they lived a communistic life with every person being in his or her own place and rank and doing his or her own work, and all sharing the fruits of the labor of all. Every one, whether he was farmer or shoemaker or carpenter or tavern-keeper or doctor, did the work which he was considered best fitted to do. They were as industrious as a hive of bees, building houses, clearing land, constructing roads, making pottery, distilling liquor, sawing boards, keeping a store, sending their barter by wagons to the Cape Fear and to Charleston and getting goods in exchange and so on. All had their designated places of residence—the married couples in their houses, the young men in one house, the unmarried young women in another; for their Sunday afternoon strolls those of one sex followed one path, those of the other sex another, but with provisions for exchange of paths on certain Sundays of the month. And marriages were arranged for the young people by the church council, though either party to the arrangement had the liberty of refusing to accept it. In most cases, and always in providing a wife for the minister, who was required to have one, a lot was cast to determine whether the proposed union was in accord with the will of Christ, and it sometimes happened that four or five trials by lot had to be made, and even then the woman chosen sometimes refused, but usually surrendered after two or three days. The whole day was mapped out for all from youngest to

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<sup>24</sup> P. 256 f.



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oldest by the Church. Morning and evening prayers were regularly held for all the congregation, and there were regular hours for work, with blowing of trumpets and ringing of bells. They had the usual church services of other churches, and at times special services for children and regularly an Hour of Song. With their singing at all services they had instrumental music, at first with violins and other light instruments, and on July 8, 1762, they heard at the Hour of Song (Singstunde) for the first time in Carolina an organ which they had received from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and "were very, very happy and thankful." All members of the congregation could sing and many could play some musical instrument. Often some member of the group would write a song for some special occasion and adapt it to some tune. The ministers were able men, well educated, and were gladly heard by the officials and other most prominent men of the Province who had stopped in Wachovia, attracted by the good beverages and meals of the tavern on their journeys. They had communion services regularly once a month, usually preceded by a Lovefeast, but communion was only for the elect of the Lord, the Brethren, and they deferred it if a respected visitor was present at the morning hour appointed for it. The Lovefeasts, however, were not seclusive and might be shared by others and often celebrated some happy occasion. Even the children had their Lovefeasts. An indispensable member of their communion was the doctor. The first was Dr. Hans Martin Kalberlahn, a man who like all their other doctors had the training of the schools and was an able physician and surgeon. His fame spread through the surrounding country and to him people brought their sick, often from great distances and other states; he fell a victim to the typhus fever which came with the war of 1754-63. They had their schools in which their children were regularly trained, and illiteracy was unknown among them. And their

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children had advantages of daily religious instruction far better than in any other community in North Carolina. Industrially, educationally, and religiously, the people of Wachovia as a whole were the most cultured in the State, and as such they were much respected and exerted an influence much out of proportion to their numbers.

Ecclesiastically, the Moravians had an episcopal form of government, and had been recognized by an Act of Parliament of 1749 as "an ancient Protestant Episcopal Church"; in 1755, by an act of the General Assembly of North Carolina, Wachovia had been erected into a parish with the same rights and immunities as the parishes of the Church of England in the Province. Accordingly, the Moravians had their own vestry and exercised all their religious functions without let, hindrance or persecution or malediction by officers and zealots of the Established Church. This parish, in honor of Governor Dobbs, was called Dobbs Parish. The Parliamentary Act of 1749 had made concessions to the Moravians in regard to taking oaths and military service, to both of which they were opposed on religious grounds, but for the latter of these they had to make a fight in North Carolina when soldiers were wanted for the various Indian wars and in the struggle for Independence. They were often in peril of being drafted but as often escaped actual military service; in so doing they incurred much ill-will, especially among some of the soldiers from the neighboring counties, like Wilkes, who were almost ready to destroy their settlement. They were slow to break their allegiance with Great Britain, but in the end proved true patriots, and paid the triple taxes assessed against all who refused to bear arms. In addition, they furnished supplies of every kind to the troops who on many occasions were camped in and near Wachovia, sometimes enemy troops, but most often patriots. Their towns were often stripped bare of any thing that soldiers could eat, drink or wear. In 1780 the session of the General

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Assembly was held in Salem. During all these troubles the Moravians had the friendship and protection of several powerful patriots. The actual result of the war, however, was to emphasize the differences between the Moravians and the people generally of the State; never, since the Revolution, have they exercised the influence that they had exercised before.

Of the settlements and distribution of the Presbyterians a rather extended account has been given already, and need not be repeated here. Although they came in much greater numbers than the Moravians they occupied no great tract of land on which settlement was restricted to those of their faith. But in 1762, seeing the success of the Moravians, one group of Pennsylvania Presbyterians had their agents trying to find a large tract of land, 30,000 to 100,000 acres on which to settle and build a town. To judge by the Moravian records, Moravians and Presbyterians had very little intercourse and there is some evidence that they regarded each other with distrust and as rivals.<sup>25</sup> In some of the southwestern counties, such as Mecklenburg, the Presbyterians constituted the dominant political group, and acted as a unit in the important matters that led to the Revolution

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<sup>25</sup> Rev. George Soelle, Moravian missionary, in his diary for August, 1772, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 799, speaks of the Presbyterians on the Buffalo, near Greensboro, as "rich and well satisfied with themselves." When Surry County was set up in 1770 the line separating Surry from Rowan ran through Wachovia, leaving part in Rowan County and destroying Dobbs Parish which was co-extensive with Wachovia. The Brethren believed this was done to injure them, and with the active assistance of Governor Martin they got a bill through the General Assembly of 1773, not without much opposition, putting all Wachovia in Surry County. With reference to this the Bagge Ms. has the following, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 755: "This placing of Wachovia into Surry County proved of great benefit to the Brethren during the following war times, for it took them from under the control of the Presbyterians who were very strong and hot in Rowan." While the Committee were trusting in God waiting for action on the bill, "they heard various accusations, for example, that the Brethren would have their own government in Wachovia, that they were a lazy, useless people, who ate five times a day, that they harbored runaway negroes, etc." *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 754.

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of 1776. In the counties later formed from the territory of Mecklenburg—to the east Cabarrus and to the west the counties south of the Granville line and as far west as Polk County—while Presbyterians and Germans were numerous, the population was much more composite, with many racial and religious elements. In the counties to the North, except for some strong Presbyterian groups in Rowan and Iredell and some Quakers in Surry and Yadkin, there was a great diversity of racial and religious elements in the settlers. The same was true in the counties later formed to the west and southwest on the frontiers of the Cherokee Indians. Accordingly, it was the territory of the Granville districts and the newly settled frontiers and restricted areas in the Broad River section next to South Carolina that furnished a more fertile field for the planting of Baptist churches. We are now ready to undertake the work of tracing the development of the Baptists in these areas of the State, and first in that part of this district that formed the original Rowan County.

As indicated on the map in the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* of 1952, in the territory of the original Rowan County are the Baptist associations named below with indication of dates of organization and numbers of churches and members as found in that publication. In a few instances the associations extend beyond the boundary lines of the county as it was in the beginning.

| <i>Association</i> | <i>Date of Formation</i> | <i>Churches</i> | <i>Members</i> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Alexander          | 1887                     | 21              | 4,748          |
| Alleghany          | 1897                     | 12              | 854            |
| Ashe               | 1886                     | 59              | 6,103          |
| Avery              | 1912                     | 29              | 3,634          |
| Blue Ridge         | 1888                     | 41              | 7,554          |
| Brier Creek        | 1811                     | 33              | 7,041          |
| Brushy Mountain    | 1872                     | 36              | 7,398          |
| Buncombe           | 1182                     | 83              | 23,201         |
| Caldwell           | 1885                     | 63              | 14,621         |



## IN WESTERN CAROLINA

| <i>Association</i>                | <i>Date of Formation</i> | <i>Churches</i> | <i>Members</i>        |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Catawba River                     | 1836                     | 44              | 9,747                 |
| Dan Valley                        | 1947                     | 22              | 5,198                 |
| Elkin                             | 1879                     | 21              | 5,163                 |
| French Broad                      | 1807                     | 46              | 8,045                 |
| Liberty                           | 1832                     | 37              | 10,420                |
| Mitchell                          | 1884                     | 36              | 6,864                 |
| New Found                         | 1856                     | 32              | 4,029                 |
| Piedmont                          | 1894                     | 76              | 27,464                |
| Pilot Mountain                    | 1885                     | 70              | 24,949                |
| Randolph                          | 1935                     | 42              | 6,580                 |
| Rowan                             | 1928                     | 31              | 9,404                 |
| South Fork                        | 1880                     | 58              | 14,842                |
| South Mountain                    | 1911                     | 28              | 4,430                 |
| South Yadkin                      | 1873                     | 35              | 9,385                 |
| Stone Mountain                    | 1897                     | 26              | 4,168                 |
| Stony Fork                        | 1862                     | 19              | 1,923                 |
| Surry                             | 1903                     | 61              | 11,045                |
| Three Forks                       | 1941                     | 44              | 8,163                 |
| Yadkin                            | 1786                     | 31              | 7,582                 |
| Yancey                            | 1888                     | 33              | 5,310                 |
| Totals for the 29<br>associations |                          | 1,169           | 259,865 <sup>26</sup> |

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that the dates given above are those from the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* for 1952, and are not in every instance in accord with the account which follows.

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## II

### EARLY BAPTISTS IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA—2

Our records show that Baptists were active very early in that section of North Carolina which in 1753 was cut off from Anson County and erected into the county of Rowan. In the first volume of this work account has been given of the establishment of a Baptist church in the Jersey Settlement before the year 1755, and of another on Abbott's Creek in 1756. Both of these churches were east of the Yadkin River in what is now Davidson County, but the next church of the Baptists in this section was west of the Yadkin, in the settlement across the river from the Moravian settlements and extending some miles north and south and indefinitely to the west. This was the church which Morgan Edwards calls Shallow Fords, and says consisted of three branches, "one near the Fords," one in the Forks of the Yadkin, and a third at Mulberry Fields. *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* reveal that Baptist ministers were traveling through and preaching in this section as early as 1760. In March of that year Elder John Thomas of Toisnot Baptist Church (in the present county of Wilson) while on his way from Bethabara to Abbott's Creek was killed by the Cherokee Indians who a few days before had reached the Yadkin.<sup>1</sup> From the same source and

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<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 230, entry for March 20, 1760. These records are the authoritative source of much of the early Baptist history of this section.

from Morgan Edwards we learn of communication through this section of the great Virginia Baptist preacher, Elder Samuel Harris, with the church at Abbott's Creek, the minister of which, Elder Daniel Marshall, had baptized Harris. The first Baptist resident of this section of whom record is made, was James Hampton, at whose home on Town Fork just north of Wachovia, Br. Etwein, Moravian missionary, by request, preached for the first time on June 12, 1763. Later, as the records show, Hampton was a man prominent both as a Baptist and as a citizen at whose home neighbors assembled to plan resistance to the exactions of Governor Tryon.<sup>2</sup>

On August 10, 1763, a young Baptist preacher named Schmidt (Smith), a schoolmate of several of the Brethren, seemingly at Princeton, visited Bethabara. Probably he was Rev. Hezekiah Smith of Long Island<sup>3</sup> who became distinguished for his labors in South Carolina and other places.

*The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, on which the above statements are based, tell of considerable activity of Baptist ministers in this section in the next few years. The Rev. Samuel Harris, described as "the well-known Baptist preacher from Virginia," in company with James Hampton of Town Fork and Mr. Barker of Dan River, visited the Brethren at Bethabara in August 1766, and he and his party were entertained by them. He was "on a preaching tour," and it is stated in the *Memorabilia* for the year that it was hoped that the information he gained on his visit "may be for his good and the good of those to whom he preaches, for at this time the Baptists are the only ones in the country who go far and wide preaching and caring for souls."<sup>4</sup> Mr. Harris' presence again in

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 272, 334, 378; II, 801.

<sup>3</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 274; Cramp, *Baptist History*, p. 568; Miss Leah Townsend, *History of South Carolina Baptists*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 321.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Wachovia on a preaching tour on August 25, 1770, is noticed in the Wachovia Diary of that date, in which it is said: "The well-known Virginia minister, Mr. Harris, with two of his people, passed to day, but could not stop as he has an engagement to preach at another place to-morrow. He preached today at the home of our neighbor Banner (seemingly a Baptist). We thought that he was to preach there Wednesday, and had planned to invite him here, but it was too late." A further indication of the good relations existing in this early period between Mr. Harris and his fellow Baptists and the Moravian Brethren, is that on October 23, 1772, Mr. Harris entertained the Moravian missionary, Mr. Soelle, who on the next day preached at the "General Meeting of the Baptists" at the request of Mr. Harris, who had come home the preceding night from his preaching round.<sup>5</sup>

Again, the Moravian records reveal the activity of Baptists in this section. Early in the year 1767, Brother Richard Utley, the minister of Wachovia who preached in English had, on request, preached more or less often at several places, among them Abbott's Creek and Robert Ellroth's house at the Shallow Ford, but "in the latter part of the year requests grew few, and (on) November 28th it is recorded that the reason for this was the activity of a certain Baptist or New Light preacher, who was preaching frequently in the neighborhood and had baptized a number of grown persons." That such preaching had been heard previously in that section is indicated by the statement which follows: "The result of his instruction was considered doubtful, for the same thing had happened several times in preceding years with no lasting effect, for the preacher laid great stress on a better life, but not through the atonement of Jesus."<sup>6</sup> Doubtless, the Baptist preacher to whom refer-

<sup>5</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, pp. 665, 802.

<sup>6</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 352. Evidently the position of the Baptists on atonement was misunderstood.



ence is made was Rev. Joseph Murphy of whose previous work some account is given in volume one of this work.<sup>7</sup> Before another year a Baptist meeting house had been built on the Yadkin, and on November 30, 1768, Brother Utley with the approval "of Mr. Murfy, the Baptist Minister," was invited to preach in it.<sup>8</sup>

In essential harmony with the Moravian records is the account of Morgan Edwards, who says that in 1768 Mr. Murphy left his church at Little River in Anson (now Montgomery) County. The meeting house at Shallow Fords, which Edwards supposed was built in 1769, was, he tells us, 30 feet by 26 feet; he says further that the church was constituted in 1769, and in three years had established two branches, one in the Forks of the Yadkin, and another at Mulberry Fields, in the service of which he had as assistants David Allen, John Cates and David Chapman. Each of the three branches had a house of worship. The church when first constituted had 32 members, but in three years' time was, with its branches, serving 350 families and had increased in membership to 185. "They had their beginning," says Mr. Edwards, "partly by emigrant Baptists from Little River; partly by the remains of Mr. Gano's church in Jersey-settlement, and partly by the labour of Mr. Murphy." As said above, on November 30, 1768, Br. Utley, the Moravian minister, "was invited to preach in the Baptist Meeting House on the Yadkin," and accepted, being assured by Mr. Little, who brought the invitation that it was given with the approval of Mr. Murphy (Elder Joseph Murphy), the Baptist minister.<sup>9</sup> This enables us to know with certainty, the date, if not of the establishment of the first Baptist Church in North Carolina beyond the Yadkin, at least the date of the completion of its house of worship.

<sup>7</sup> Pages 226, 229, 232, 294, 295, 299, 408ff.

<sup>8</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 376.

<sup>9</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, Wachovia Diary, p. 376.

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The generally accepted date for both, 1769, is due to Morgan Edwards who is often erroneous in his dates.

For our further account it will be of advantage to both writer and reader to have a clear understanding of the name and location of this church, about which there has been much confusion among even those who have undertaken to write on the Baptists of this section.<sup>10</sup>

First, as to the name. "Shallow Fords" is the name Edwards used as the headline for his accounts of this church and its branches, of which more will be said below. Possibly the church was locally known as Shallow Fords because one of the first preaching places of Elder Joseph Murphy in this region was "at Robert Elworth's house at Shallow Fords," and because from the first converts joining the church were baptized in the waters of the Ford, as were those baptized into the membership of the Baptist churches of this region for a century or more later.<sup>11</sup> It is doubtless due to Edwards' use of name that in all later Baptist records the church had the name of Shallow Fords, but those acquainted with the church and the region did not use the name Shallow Fords for it. It is not called by that name in any of the numerous references to the church in the records of the Moravians. When Br. Utey preached in the church in November 1768 it was called "the Baptist Meeting House on the Yadkin." In 1771 and later when Br. Soelle, the Moravian missionary, was often preaching in it, it was called "Mr. Murphy's Meeting House." This was in accord

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<sup>10</sup> For instance, Professor J. T. Alderman, who has contributed so much of interest to Baptist history, in his article, "The Baptists in the Forks of the Yadkin," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 242, argues that this church was thirty miles west of the Yadkin River, and acquired a new name, "Hunters Creek," that is, the present Flat Rock Baptist Church.

<sup>11</sup> Mr. S. O. Rich, a native of this region now living near Wake Forest, states that he was baptized in the baptizing hole at Shallow Fords, when as a boy he joined the Farmington Baptist Church eight miles to the west.

with custom of that day when a Baptist church was often called by the name of the minister then in charge of it, especially if he were the first minister. After Murphy's departure, the name "Mr. Murphy's Meeting House" is not once used as the name of this church, but instead begins immediately in the Moravian records reference to "Timber Ridge Meeting House," a name it possibly had on its organization. Asplund, in his *Register* of 1790-1791, and the early minutes of the Yadkin Association have the simple name Timber Ridge. Asplund found no other Baptist church in this section.

Having used the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* to determine the date and name of this church, we find that by use of the same *Records* we can determine its location. It was the meeting house attended by those whose homes were in the settlement west of the Yadkin and opposite Wachovia from Bethania on the north to the Idol Ferry on the south. It was "some miles west" of the Yadkin, centrally located, seemingly with some regard for the convenience of those who attended its services. It was near the home of Murphy and was in easy distances from the homes of many of the more prominent and substantial settlers where the missionaries of the Moravians often spent the night before preaching the next day in the church, to surprisingly large congregations—200 or more—of preaching-hungry settlers. The *Records* leave no doubt that the house of worship variously known as Mr. Murphy's Meeting House and Timber Ridge stood near the site of the house in which the Timber Ridge Baptist Church worshipped until its dissolution about the year 1815. Nearby is an old graveyard. There is a tradition that when a new house was needed it was erected a short distance from the first building. The Baptists sold the property to the Methodists, who erected a new church to which they gave the name of Bethlehem.

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For further details about the church and the community see the footnote.<sup>12</sup>

It is hoped that the statements above clear up the great confusion that has existed even among writers of our early Baptist history as to the location and name of Elder Joseph Murphy's church west of the Yadkin near Wachovia. The greater part of our previous account has been based on the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, and so will much of the account to follow, but we are also indebted to Morgan Edwards for information concerning the experiences to be related later of Joseph Murphy during the period Tryon was with his armies in the "settlements of the Insurgents." At this point, it is only necessary to say that Murphy eluded those sent out to capture him. With the account of his escape, Morgan Edwards ends his story of Murphy and the Baptists west of the Yadkin. No other Baptist has written of it, but from this point the story of Murphy and his labors until March, 1773, may be found

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<sup>12</sup> Extracts from the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II. From the section headed "SOELLE'S DIARY," p. 786. Editorial statement. "Mr. Murphee (Murphy), who had a meeting house west of the Yadkin, made him (Soelle) welcome there whenever he chose to preach."—p. 788. "Crossed the Yadkin, and preached in Mr. Murphee's (Murphy's) meeting house some miles beyond. Morphee (Murphy) lived in the neighborhood, and sometimes entertained Soelle in his home." But on this trip, April 1771, Soelle spent the night at the home of Abraham Crisson, which is shown on the map facing page 448, Vol. I, some miles south, below the Deep Creek, but near the Yadkin there. (Some distance north of Shallow Ford, and south of Bethania.) II, p. 792. The next night Soelle spent with William (Billy) Bryant, whose land lay along the Yadkin, on the south side, at the western curve of what is locally called The Bend. His wife had been baptized by Murphy. It was possible to go from William Bryant's up the west bank of the Yadkin to the Shallow Ford, and thence on the Shallow Ford road to Salem.—p. 787. There seem to have been three usual crossing places of the Yadkin River, (a) from Bethania to Murphee's or Glen's, (b) the Shallow Ford, and (c) another ferry, doubtless the one later called Idol's ferry, for local tradition states that it was by the ford at this point that Daniel Boone crossed and recrossed the Yadkin. It would seem that when Soelle visited Murphy he crossed the river at Bethania, where was the ferry nearest Murphy's home and meeting house.

Soon after Soelle's death on May 4, 1773, his successor, Br. Utley, preached at Timber Ridge, a church now first named in the *Records*, regularly on his tours, beginning in July 1773. On July 24 (page 803) he "crossed the Atkin, visited Col. Hunt; spent the night with Morgan Bryant," and the



in some detail in the diary of Br. Soelle, the Moravian missionary, much of which is given in translation in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*.

That he resumed his work almost immediately after the Regulator trouble is shown by Br. Soelle's references to Murphy soon thereafter. He did not find Murphy at home on September 10, 1771, and spent the night with a Baptist who lived a few miles further up Deep Creek. On September 20, and again on September 27, 1771, both Soelle and Murphy preached at the meeting house of Mr. Glenn, at no great distance further west, and both were entertained in Glenn's home. Thereafter, for the next year and a half, till the eve of Soelle's death, May 4, 1773, one may find in Soelle's diary much about Murphy and his work. Murphy was an able preacher, respected by Soelle, who sometimes gives the texts from which Murphy preached; he was acceptable also; he drew large congregations in many neighborhoods; he preached far and wide—up and down the

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next day preached in Timber Ridge meeting house, being accompanied thither by James Bryant, son of Morgan Bryant, and spent the night with John Bryant. On July 29 he visited Thomas Bryant, William Bryant, James Forbush, reading the Soelle Memoir in each home, and again spent the night with Morgan Bryant. On June 30 he called on Col. Hunt, George Boone, William Williams, Roger Turner and his father, and lodged with Samuel Bryant, and on July 31, preached again in Timber Ridge meeting house, which is the only meeting house mentioned in all this section. It was in easy distances of the homes of the families mentioned in all directions from Timber Ridge. The Moravian missionaries, Br. Utley until his death in October, 1775, and then Br. Fritz, continued to visit the church and community until after the outbreak of the Revolution.

The location of the Timber Ridge church is indicated in a statement made by Miss Flossie Martin, in a letter dated Mocksville, N. C., August 30, 1952, as follows: "The present church (that is, the Methodist church Bethlehem which is on the property of the former Timber Ridge Baptist church) is nine miles from Mocksville, about a quarter of a mile to the left (as one goes from Mocksville) of the Winston-Salem-Mocksville highway. Local people seem to know that the original building was a mile further up the highway and still to the left. The second building was near the present old part of the graveyard; a third building was near the graveyard. Old people told me that their parents told them they could look out of the door and see the Eaton stones. Most of the old stones have been destroyed. However, my mother's generation used to tell me that their great grandparents were charter members of the Timber Ridge Baptist Church. (That is why I got interested.)"

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Yadkin, to the south and west in the section known as the Forks of the Yadkin, on Deep Creek and its branches, and even as far west as Hunters Creek, and to the north and west in Mulberry Fields. Murphy had the respect and encouragement of the strong and wealthy families such as the Bryants who had large land-holdings to the southwest of the Yadkin, and was entertained and provided preaching places in their homes, especially in that of Morgan Bryant, who lived on the west bank of the Yadkin at the Bend, several miles south of Shallow Fords, where once Murphy preached in a meeting protracted for several days. Morgan Bryant's wife was baptized by Murphy, and members of the family attended worship at Timber Ridge, Murphy's church. Already the Baptist women west of the Yadkin were showing much interest in religious development.

At this time only the Moravian missionaries in addition to Mr. Murphy seem to have been preaching in the settlements near Timber Ridge Baptist Church. Murphy, however, had already begun preaching on Deep Creek. In June, 1772, another Baptist preacher, Rev. William Cook, had already come and was preaching with much acceptance on Deep Creek. Already the Baptists, probably many of them converted under Murphy's preaching and baptized by him, were numerous on Deep Creek, seemingly the only group of English-speaking Christians in that section, always spoken of with much respect, and very zealous in winning adherents to the Baptist faith. On March 5, 1773, Soelle reported that Murphy was planning to leave his home near the Timber Ridge meeting house and move elsewhere, which he did, moving further up Deep Creek, about the time of Soelle's death.

In the chapters to follow, there will be found further account of the Baptist development at the three branches of Mr. Murphy's Timber Ridge Church (Timber Ridge, Mulberry Fields and the Forks of the Yadkin), on Deep

Creek and at Dutchmans Creek and its various branches, and of the continuation of the Baptist development to the east of the Yadkin, in the Jersey Settlement, at Boone's Ford and on Abbott's Creek and Carraway Creek. But the story of the Yadkin Association begins a new section of the work, and we first should consider in some detail the campaign Tryon waged in the section of this development, and the effect of his campaign upon it.



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### III

## BAPTISTS AND REGULATORS

Probably the first recorded activity of Regulators in North Carolina was that of which a short account is found in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*,<sup>1</sup> in the Bethabara Diary for September 23, 1758. It is in a statement made to the Moravian minister, Br. Etwein, by William Churton, Lord Granville's chief surveyor, when he had come to Bethabara from his headquarters in Salisbury, and is as follows:

. . . The "mob," about 700 strong, had formulated its demands into certain Articles. One Article demanded that the Vestries should be abolished and that each denomination should pay its own ministers.

"Mob" was the invidious term used by the later Provincial governors and their friends to designate those now generally known as Regulators.<sup>2</sup> The word suggests that its members were numerous, disturbingly numerous for those who used that term. The group itself, in 1768, chose the name "Regulators" as indicative of their purpose and function, although there is indication that they were popularly known by the name "Mob." In Mr. Churton's statement the reference is not to a disorderly and tumultuous meeting, but to an orderly assemblage of able and determined men, who formulated their grievances and demanded their correction.

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, pp. 497, 537.



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Their number was surprisingly large, "about 700 strong." Six years before, in 1752, there was not a white settler in legal possession of land in the entire section of the Granville Tract bounded on the north by the Virginia line, on the east by a line running due north and south along the line between Orange and Rowan counties, on the south by a line running east and west along the northern boundary line of the present counties of Moore, Montgomery, Stanly, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, and extending indefinitely westward. Now, after only six years, in the vicinity of Salisbury, from this hitherto unsettled territory about 700 men met and demanded correction of governmental abuses of their fundamental political and religious rights. Seemingly, this was the first Regulator meeting in North Carolina of which there is record.

Some questions arise. Who were these 700 men? Where did they come from? Why did they come? What common interest had brought them to this meeting so soon after their arrival in North Carolina?

There is general agreement that the opening for sale of the lands of the Granville Tract in farms of any size desired was a great influence in bringing many early settlers to this section of North Carolina, but probably stronger than land hunger was the pioneer spirit which has always been characteristic of English-speaking colonists, and has made them successful and distinguished above all others. The first settlers in the newly-opened Granville Tract had their full share of this. Without doubt, the pioneer settlers in this new country thought of it as a land of freedom and opportunity. In North Carolina they would be free from the handicaps, the social, political, economical, religious and governmental abuses from which they had been suffering, and they could order their lives and government as they would, in a truly democratic way, without having to pay taxes for the support of aristocratic officers and the minis-

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ters of an Established Church or having to hear their sermons on Sunday, as those of the new settlers who had come from Virginia had been compelled to do.

However, the new settlers did not long enjoy such blissful thoughts. In 1753 Rowan County was formed, and soon afterwards the Rowan Courthouse was built in the town known since 1755 as Salisbury. Then came the county officers, sheriffs and assistant sheriffs, tax collectors, courthouse officers, King's attorneys,—all strangers, from eastern North Carolina, appointees of Governor Dobbs, and all to be supported with fees collected from the new settlers in Rowan County. Many of these officers were not satisfied with the fees allowed by law. Some became extortioners and continued their nefarious practices unchecked until the last year of Tryon's administration.<sup>3</sup> In these early years nearly every settler had a deed for the land for which he had recently paid the purchase price, but the deed did not make him secure in the possession of his land unless it was registered. Thus it was in the power of the corrupt registers to prey upon the settlers by charging what they would for the registration of deeds, and this they did without interference. Again, the new settlers were having to pay taxes of which they had never dreamed. One was a county tax, which was small and caused no complaint. However, there was a larger tax for the support of the Governor and the Provincial Government. This was a poll tax which the tax-collecting sheriffs every year were demanding that every settler pay, not only for himself, but for every other male member of his family sixteen years old, or more. Another tax, also levied against all males sixteen years of age and older, was the Vestry Tax. This seems first to have been demanded in Rowan County when the revised Vestry Act, that of 1754-1755, came into force. The taxpayers had

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<sup>3</sup> *Colonial Records*, VIII, p. 533; *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 451.

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little means of knowing for what purpose other taxes were used, but information about this tax and other matters relating to the Vestries may be found in the Act itself, and gives better understanding of the "mob's" action. The provisions of certain sections were as follows:

14. "And be it further Enacted . . . That the Vestry of each respective Parish shall have full Power & Authority, and they are hereby directed and required, between *Easter Monday* & the first day of *November* yearly to lay such a Poll Tax as they shall judge necessary, for purchasing Glebes, and Satisfying the Expence of their respective Parishes."

15. Summary. The tax collectors shall "Distress the Goods of Delinquents," that is, sell enough of their chattels to pay their taxes.

16. Summary. Parish Glebes to be purchased, to contain Two Hundred Acres at least.

17. Summary. Houses and Conveniences thereon to be erected.

20. "And to the End that the Clergy may have a decent & comfortable maintenance and Support, without being obliged to follow any other Employment than that of their Holy Function, in ye Cure of their respective Parishes, *Be it Enacted by ye Authority aforesaid*, That every Minister hereafter to be preferred to or receiv'd into any Parish within this Province shall have & receive an Annual Salary of Eighty Pounds, Proclamation Money, to be levied assessed collected & Paid in Manner herein before directed.

24. (This section provides that every minister shall) "have a Certificate from the Bishop of London, . . . been duly Ordained, conformable to ye Doctrine & Discipline of ye Church of England and of a good Life & Conversation."

In view of these conditions which had developed in Rowan County by 1758, when few of the settlers had been in the region for as long as six years, it should not be difficult to understand why the "mob" met and formulated demands. These settlers were not underlings, but were of the best stock of colonists that came to the New World; they called no man master; they were lovers of freedom, and because they had not obtained the full measure of it in their former homes, they had come as pioneer settlers to the Granville

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district expecting to find it there. They were disappointed. As we have seen, the Vestry Act provided that the minister supported by the taxes of the settlers must be a member of the Church of England. To what church did the members of the "mob" belong—those who were so strongly demanding "that vestries be abolished and that each denomination pay its own ministers"? The records indicate that nearly all were Baptists. Dr. G. W. Greene, a native of Wilkes County, and well acquainted with the early history of all the region, makes a statement to this effect in his article, "The Baptists in the Upper Yadkin Valley."<sup>4</sup> Of like import are many entries in the diary of Br. George Soelle, the missionary of the Moravian Brethren who in the years 1771-1773 made missionary tours in all directions from Salem, where he found among the English-speaking settlers individual Baptists and Baptist families, and several Baptist churches, but hardly any of other faiths.<sup>5</sup>

Let us then consider the Baptists in this section. As soon as the Granville district was open for settlement, the Baptists began to come. Among the earliest were those who came from Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, to what has since been known as the Jersey Settlement. There Rev. Hugh McAden, the Presbyterian minister, found them in 1755 with a preacher of their own, Rev. Benjamin Miller, under whose preaching some of the settlers originally of the Presbyterian faith had become Baptists. A year later the distinguished Rev. John Gano came, organized the Jersey Baptist Church, and labored so acceptably and successfully that in the few years of his pastorate, ending in 1759, nearly all the English-speaking settlers in the Jersey Settlement became either active members of the Jersey Baptist Church or its supporters. The settlers were of

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<sup>4</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> Foote, in his *Sketches*, indicates his belief that among the early settlers of Rowan County were a few scattered Presbyterians, but too few to form a church or congregation.



## BAPTISTS AND REGULATORS

the best type that ever at any period came to North Carolina, among them the parents of Daniel Boone, the Reeds, the Durhams, and the Greenes, blood relatives of General Nathaniel Greene. Possibly Gano himself, and certainly not a few members of the Jersey Baptist Church, belonged to the "mob" that in 1758 met near Salisbury, no great distance from the Jersey Church. Probably not in all America, certainly not in North Carolina, was there a minister of the Church of England who in ability and religious service even approximated John Gano or two other Baptist ministers, Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall, who had begun their activities in the Granville district in 1755, and were continuing them in 1758. Neither Gano, Stearns, nor Marshall had a Certificate from the Bishop of London, none of them was a minister of the Church of England, and none was supported by a Vestry Tax paid by the people. Nor, under the Act of 1741, were they, or any other Baptist ministers, allowed to unite people in marriage and receive the considerable marriage fee provided for the ministers of the Established Church. All three were Baptists whose support was provided by the labor of their own hands and the free-will offerings of the members of their churches. When, in September, 1758, Churton reported the actions of the "mob," to which possibly all three belonged, they had been preaching the gospel of salvation to the religiously destitute settlers of Rowan County for three years. But though the Vestry Act had been in force for the same period, 1755-1758, there is no record that any minister of the Established Church ministered to the religious welfare of the inhabitants of the region during that time.

Of the three Baptist ministers named, only Gano had been preaching in the Jersey Settlement, across the Yadkin from Salisbury, which is clearly indicated as the meeting place of the "mob" that made the demands reported by Churton. Gano was a Particular (Regular) Baptist; Stearns

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

and Marshall were Separate Baptists, and though they did not labor in the Jersey Settlement with Gano, their work abounded in other fields among the settlers in Rowan County. Immediately after coming to Sandy Creek they turned their faces to the west. The first report we have of Stearns is of his preaching and baptizing on the Yadkin, where Tidence Lane saw him sitting under a peach tree, making ready to preach. Marshall at the same time was preaching on the Uwharrie and Abbott's Creek, and within a year had joined with Stearns in establishing the Abbott's Creek Church. Then both went far and wide through the settlements of the Granville district, often to neighborhoods far distant from their churches, making and baptizing converts. On June 2, 1758, shortly before Churton made report of the "mob" "about 700 strong," Stearns organized the Sandy Creek Association and found that in three years time it had increased to three churches, consisting of upwards of 900 communicants, *viz.*; Sandy Creek, Abbott's Creek, and Deep River (Morgan Edwards). The members of the Deep River Church were relatively few. In the Sandy Creek Church were 606. The remainder were in Abbott's Creek. As Stearns and Marshall had been very active among the settlers, it is evident that many of them had become Baptists, and that they, together with those who were already Baptists on their arrival, constituted the greater part of the population of the region, and, in turn, of the "mob" of 700 members. The demands of the "mob," as reported by Churton, were for rights of which Baptists have always been recognized champions—Religious Liberty and the Separation of Church and State.

Other considerations indicate that the 700 were chiefly Baptists. At that time there was no other denominational group from which many could have come. In 1758 there were probably not more than a score of members of the Established Church in all Rowan County, and they, for

the most part, were only temporary residents of the county, appointed by Governor Dobbs as county officers, and were enemies of the "mob." Presbyterians were probably less numerous, and a few years later the Presbyterians were furnishing soldiers to Tryon for the suppression of the Regulators. The only other denomination of English-speaking Christians, some of whose members probably were of the "mob" in 1758 were the Quakers. There were already Quaker settlements at Cane Creek and New Garden and many Quaker neighborhoods in the more westerly portion of Orange County of the day. Probably some of these were, in 1758, near enough for co-operation with the "mob" in its demands. Since 1701 the Quakers had been suffering from governors intent on depriving all Dissenters, Quakers in particular, of all their civil and religious rights. They had been suffering from the various vestry acts. Now, when the Vestry Act of 1755 was in force, an act only less severe and intolerant of Dissent than that of 1765 in Tryon's administration, and Baptists and Quakers were suffering the same evils, it was only natural that they should co-operate in demands for their correction. It was doubtless this co-operation, begun as early as the "meeting of the mob" reported by Churton in 1758, that caused Governor Tryon to declare that the Regulators were a "faction of Quakers and Baptists," of which notice was taken in Chapter XV of our first volume. It was in this section that Baptists and the less numerous Quakers began what was afterwards known as the Regulator movement, and it was among the settlers in this region that the movement seems to have been most generally adopted. This offers some explanation of Tryon's campaign through the Baptist neighborhoods in May and June of 1771, after the Battle of Alamance.

After the account of the "mob," "700 strong," given above, there is no other record of it, or of Regulators until

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

after Tryon had become Governor. The French and Indian War of 1754 to 1763 did not seriously affect North Carolina except in taxation for its support, but the Cherokee invasion which began in 1759 did cause serious disturbances in the Rowan County settlements, and many of the settlers left their homes and sought safety further east. After a few years, however, the Cherokees no longer were a threat and Rowan County was filling with settlers, most of whom continued to be Baptists, and who, being unmolested, lived on good terms with all and continued to increase in number. By 1767 the number of taxables in Rowan was 3,643, larger than in any other county in the Province except Orange. However, it was not until 1770, a year before Tryon's departure from North Carolina, that a minister, Theodorus S. Drage, on Tryon's recommendation, came to serve in St. Luke's parish. When Drage had come he found a vestry who refused to levy a vestry tax, and was soon forced to resign his benefice. On February 8, 1771, as told in our first volume, Drage complained that the "Anabaptists" were being married by their own justices and itinerant preachers, bidding him defiance and paying no marriage fees. There are many indications that such was the practice throughout Rowan County. Very few of the young men of the section were able to accumulate enough money to pay for the marriage fees prescribed in the Provincial Marriage Act of 1766, devised by Tryon for the benefit of the officers and ministers of the Established Church. Accordingly, both before and after the passage of that act, many of the young men of Rowan County when ready to marry secured the services of a Baptist minister or a justice of the peace. As has been told in our former account, a great number of such marriages were validated by the Marriage Act of 1766. Drage's statement indicates that the passage of the act had little effect on the custom.<sup>6</sup> He denoted the Separate

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<sup>6</sup> Below is a copy of a marriage license issued by Tryon under the Marriage Act of 1766. It will be observed that the license was issued by Tryon



## BAPTISTS AND REGULATORS

Anabaptists as his chief opponents; they were telling him that every one ought to support his own clergy by voluntary contributions and not be constrained by law to pay a "minister of an Establishment," (Vol. I, p. 330 f.), a view which Tryon and the friends of the Established Church regarded as heresy and treason. It was precisely the view of the "mob" as reported by Churton twelve years earlier. It was chiefly the Baptists in Rowan County who were demanding correction of abuses in church and state in 1758, and in 1770 Drage found that these Baptists had not changed, but by methods of their own devising were frustrating his plans and Governor Tryon's for the Established Church in St. Luke's parish.

Drage's report of his troubles with the Baptists in this parish could not have failed to increase the animosity of Tryon to them, an animosity which induced him in the

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himself after he had received a certificate from John Frohock, Clerk of Rowan County Court, that all fees (about ten dollars), including a large fee for Tryon himself, had been paid.

### MARRIAGE LICENCE.

North Carolina, Ss.

His Excellency

(L. S.) WILLIAM TRYON, Esq.

Wm. Tryon.

Captain General, Governor and Commander in Chief, in and over his Majesty's Province of North Carolina.

To any Orthodox Minister of the Church of England, or for Want thereof, to any regular licenced Minister of the dissenting Presbyterian Clergy, or lawful Magistrate within the same. Greeting.

By Virtue of the Power and Authority to Me given, as Governor and Commander in Chief in & over this Province, (Certificate having been made to Me by John Frohock, Clerk of Rowan-County Court, that the Bond as by Law required hath been taken and filed by him in his Office) I DO hereby Allow, Admit, and Licence you, or any of you, to Celebrate & Solemnize the Rites of Matrimony between Thomas Willson & Catherine Leviston, and to join them together, as Man & Wife, in Holy Matrimony.

Given under my Hand and Seal at Newbourn this 22nd Day of January in the Year of our Lord 1767, & in the Seventh Year of His Majesty's Reign.

By his Excellencys Command

Fount. Elwin, pr Sec:

(Copied from *Records of Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 366.)

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

next year, in the month following the Battle of Alamance, to lead his armies against the Baptist neighborhoods in and around Jersey Settlement and Bethabara and lay them to waste. Of this an account will be given below.

Without doubt, Governor Tryon had become well acquainted with the attitude of the settlers of this region to the Established Church long before Rev. T. S. Drage came on his recommendation to be minister of St. Luke's Parish in 1770. He could not have failed to know of the activities of the "mob" and of their demands much more fully than is recorded in the Bethabara Diary for September 23, 1758. Doubtless Tryon knew that the members of that "mob" were Baptists as well as Drage knew in 1770 that his chief opponents were Baptists. In 1766, the year after he became Governor, Tryon was often in Salisbury and doubtless learned at that time, if not before, that the demands made by the "mob" had not been abandoned, and that the Baptists, those "avowed enemies of mother church," were making it impossible to establish a minister of the Church of England in St. Luke's Parish. It is very probable that at this time, in his anger, he planned the suppression of the "mob" by military force if other means failed. In 1766 Tryon had no military force, but before another year he had formed one consisting of "100 young men of the best families," whom, with much pains and at considerable expense to the Province, he accoutered, trained, disciplined and led from the seashore to the Blue Ridge and back again. His professed purpose was to make a treaty with the Cherokees. A result, however, was that he had the troops he desired, made up of soldiers intensely loyal to him as their commander, convinced of his great ability as a soldier, and ready on call to form a nucleus of an army to fight Regulators. On the march to and from the Blue Ridge, they passed through Rowan County and encamped in its settlements where there were many of the Baptist faith, but

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Tryon and his well dressed and proud soldiers of the best families did not create friendly relations with the settlers.

The Cherokee Expedition was in May and June of 1767. From September 18 to 21 of the same year, the Governor and his lady, and his suite of seven gentlemen were at Bethabara on a visit. They had come on invitation of the Moravian Brethren whose practice it was to cultivate friendship with governors and other provincial officers, and Tryon took advantage of the opportunity to win their support in his activities against the Regulators. Some of the influential Brethren, though not all, became pronounced partisans of Tryon after the visit. Their references to meetings of the settlers in the Bethabara Diary became severely critical.<sup>7</sup> There is no record that either Tryon or any member of his suite came into communication during the visit with any one in the Baptist neighborhood just across the Yadkin from Bethabara and Bethania, but doubtless at this time, if not earlier, Tryon learned the character of the settlers near Wachovia from John Frohock, who, as tax collector, was already walking through that section with fear and trembling. From his hosts, the Brethren, it must be supposed that Tryon got much information about their neighbors, for until this time the friendliest relations existed between the Moravians and the other settlers in the section. Thereafter, certain of the leading Brethren gave Tryon their support both at Hillsboro in September, 1768, and in his campaign against the Baptist settlements near Jersey Church and Bethabara in May and June, 1771, all support short of bearing arms which is not permissible for Moravian

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<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 378. (Bethabara Diary, May 28, 1768) "On the Yadkin a number of settlers met at the home of Isaac Free and signed a Contract against the Public Taxes and other grievances. Many of them do not know what they want; it is a contrivance of certain rebellious heads." (June 12.) "Br. Utley went to the town Fork yesterday, expecting to preach today in James Hampton's (a Baptist) house, but found all the men gone to a gathering about political affairs (against government orders)."

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Brethren. The *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* show that they did not do this without giving offense to their neighbors.

The relationship between the Baptists in the Wachovia area and the Moravian Brethren had been cordial, friendly and religiously co-operative. The chief concern of both was religion. In the *Memorabilia* for 1766,<sup>8</sup> the year before Tryon's visit, we find:

Br. Richard Utley came to us in October from Pennsylvania, and since then he has not only preached here in English from time to time, but has done the same for our neighbors in the Hollow and on the Yadkin and has been invited to preach at a number of other places. This is important service, for the salvation of our poor neighbors and their children lies upon our hearts.

Mr. Harris, a well-known Baptist from Virginia, visited here to acquaint himself with our doctrine and constitution and to talk with us. We hope this may be for his good and the good of those to whom he preaches, for at this time the Baptists are the only ones in the country who go far and wide preaching and caring for souls.

The *Records of the Moravians* also tell us that at the same time other Baptist preachers were active in this territory. A meeting house was built on the Yadkin, and Utley, at the invitation of its members and its minister, Rev. Joseph Murphy, preached there on November 30, 1768, the year after Tryon's visit.<sup>9</sup> They tell of early Baptist settlers like James Hampton and their religious interests and activities.<sup>10</sup> But though Br. Utley continued as missionary, the Brethren had a new minister whose partisanship for Governor Tryon cannot have failed seriously to endanger the brotherly relations between the Baptists and the Brethren. He was Frederic William Marshall, the Wachovia Oeconomus, whose "long desired arrival" took place on February 14, 1768, and who for many years determined the policies and

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<sup>8</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 321.

<sup>9</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 376.

<sup>10</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 272, etc.



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directed the affairs of the Moravian Brethren at Bethabara and Salem. Something of his leadership among the Brethren from the beginning is indicated by the statement, "In Bethabara Br. Marshall decided various business questions, which had been awaiting his arrival; and in Salem he definitely located the Square, and the site of the chief buildings of the new town."<sup>11</sup> In a history of the Baptists the chief interest is in his co-operation with Tryon in the Regulator War in the region. He first attempted to pay his respects to the Governor in July of 1768, when Tryon was scheduled to visit Salisbury. Tryon, however, did not arrive until August, at which time Marshall "was given a kindly reception by the Governor."<sup>12</sup> In that reception, apparently, Tryon completely won Marshall, who thereafter shared Tryon's views in matters relating to the Regulators, of which he was kept well informed, and co-operated with Tryon in his operations against a supposed Regulator threat at Hillsboro in August and September, 1768, and in his campaign against the Baptists at the Jersey Settlement and near Bethabara in May and June, 1771. Like Tryon, Marshall regarded the settlers around Wachovia as dangerous enemies, a threat to the continuance of the peaceful way of life and to the very existence of the Brethren from which they were protected only by the special care of God. References in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* to settlers engaging in political activity, even those with whom Br. Utley was co-operating in religious work, are unmistakably hostile.<sup>13</sup> The extent of Tryon's influence over Marshall is strikingly indicated by the fact that he led this chief minister of the Brethren who, like the Quakers are opposed to war, to co-operate with him by supplying food and materials for his army in the Hillsboro campaign

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<sup>11</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 373.

<sup>12</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 373.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote No. 7 above.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

of September, 1768, as is shown by the following statement from the *Memorabilia*:<sup>14</sup>

Our rulers have continued to show a favorable mind toward us, as was manifest when Br. Marshall went with Br. Loesch to Salisbury to pay his first visit to the Governor. His Excellency had intended again to return to Hillsboro by way of Bethabara, but was prevented by the disturbances of the time. It is owing to the protection of our dear Father that these disturbances, caused by a Mob, have neither interfered with our accustomed life nor had any ill results for us. Meanwhile we had an opportunity to prove our loyalty to our rulers, in deed as well as in word, by sending a goodly quantity of Zweiback to Hillsboro for use of the Governor's troops.

Such co-operation continued throughout the War against the Regulators. Br. Marshall was kept well informed of Tryon's purposes and of expected "dangerous developments."<sup>15</sup> However, the trouble with the Regulators which the Brethren had been led to believe was eminent did not come.<sup>16</sup> And though stories seemingly designed to keep the

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<sup>14</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 368.

<sup>15</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 379: (Bethabara Diary, 1768) "Aug. 19. Mr. Martin Howard, Chief Justice of this Province, and several other gentlemen from Hillsbury arrived about noon, and will stay a few days, and then go to General Court in Salisbury which will be held the 5th of next month. Mr. Howard brought a letter from Capt. Collet to Br. Loesch, in which he mentioned confidentially that the Governor had left Hillsbury secretly for Mecklenburg County, and expected to be in Salisbury on the 25th; he had not told the Chief Judge of the trip, nor of his purpose, it was probably being kept secret on account of the Regulators, as just now their matter seems to be at a very critical point, and there may be dangerous developments." P. 380: "Sept. 15. . . . Toward noon Mr. Martin Armstrong came from Salisbury with the news that the Governor left there yesterday with 600 armed soldiers whom he had summoned for the protection of the Court at Hillsborough. Mr. Armstrong also said that the Regulators had presented to the Governor a written request for Pardon, but the Governor would hold his troops until the Court adjourned."

<sup>16</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 380: (Bethabara Diary, 1768) "Aug. 19. People came from Haw River, Orange County, bringing 50 bushels of wheat to exchange for pottery. They knew of no disturbance in their neighborhood caused by Regulators." "Sept. 22. The two wagons returned from taking biscuits to Hillsborough. They had not had the slightest trouble, except that they had been stopped with blows. Col. Fanning took the biscuits for *His Majesty's service*." "Oct. 4. We at last heard this much from Hillsborough,—that there was no violence at the General Court, but that the Governor had seriously considered the complaints of the Regulators concerning the unlawful acts of certain officers."

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Brethren in fear of suffering harm from the Regulators kept coming to Wachovia during the years 1769 and 1770, they all proved without foundation. Possibly they served Tryon's purposes of keeping the Moravians in alarm and hostile to the Regulators around them.

It was seemingly due primarily to the activities of Tryon and Fanning at Hillsboro in 1768 that a movement was begun which led to one of the greatest of all Baptist developments. In the Bethabara Diary for August 24, 1768, is the entry: <sup>17</sup>

A party of men from Orange County passed through our village. They were Regulators, and said they were going to Holston's River to look for land,—though there may be another reason.

An entry in the same diary about two years later reads: <sup>18</sup>

There were unusually many strangers in our town today, especially a number who do not wish to be under the law, and are moving to Holston River.

So began the great exodus of the Baptists from this section, an exodus which did not assume its full proportions until after the Battle of Alamance, and one of which Morgan Edwards' account has already been given in Chapter XVI of our first volume, to which the reader is referred. In 1768, three years before the Battle of Alamance, the Baptists had "despaired of seeing better times, and therefore quitted the Province." The only known settlers who went to the Holston River at this time were Baptists—those who began the great Baptist development there, established the first Baptist church in Tennessee, and organized the Holston Association of which Benedict gives some account.<sup>19</sup> They were seeking

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<sup>17</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 379.

<sup>18</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 415, entry for September 21, 1770.

<sup>19</sup> *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America, and Other Parts of the World*, II, p. 214. Hereafter, this work will usually be cited as *History of the Baptists*, the title appearing on its spine.

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new homes beyond the jurisdiction of Tryon where they were to find freedom to worship God as they pleased.

In spite of the fact that conditions in the section were such that many preferred to leave rather than to endure longer what they considered oppressive practices of the Provincial government, it is safe to say that during the first few months of the year 1771 the remaining inhabitants of the section did not expect war. Records show that though they were determined that the abuses to which the Provincial officers had subjected them should cease, they planned to effect this by peaceful means. This is well established by a letter written from Salisbury on March 18, 1771, to Tryon by two of the ablest officers of his appointment, John Frohock and Alexander Martin, the later of whom was afterwards from 1782-1785 and 1789-1792 governor of the State of North Carolina.<sup>20</sup> In this letter the writers tell in much detail of a conference they had with 400 or 500 men whom on March 6, 1771, they found encamped in the woods between the Yadkin and the town of Salisbury, and of whom they made inquiry as to their purpose and intentions. The writers found them "peaceably disposed beyond expectation," and further reported, "They answered they came with no Intention to disturb the Court or to injure the Person or property of any one, only to petition the Court for a redress of Grievances against Officers taking exorbitant Fees, and that their Arms (which some of them had) were not for Offence, but to defend themselves if assaulted. . . . They intimated we were some of the persons against whom they were to complain and to shew their disposition for peace and that all disputes between them and us should subside hereafter they formed a Committee to wait on us, and to propose a plan of accommodating matters." The family names of many of the committee named are the names

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<sup>20</sup> This letter is printed in full in the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, pp. 533-536.



## BAPTISTS AND REGULATORS

of well known Baptist families of that section from the earliest days to the present—Fields, Teague, Jones, Vickery, Hunter, etc. The result was that both parties appointed arbitrators who were to “Arbitrate and finally settle every difference between us whatsoever,” and who also fixed the time “on the third Tuesday in May next at John Kimborough’s on Huwaree. . . . Upon which the main Body after being informed what had been done, went through the Town, gave three Cheers and returned to their homes without using Violence to any Person whatsoever to our knowledge.” Toward the end of their letter Frohock and Martin say: “We flatter ourselves the Measures we have taken will be approved of and acceptable to your Excellency. . . . This we have undertaken to do and Time must produce the Effect. If our hopes and wishes be not too sanguine, perhaps this may be the foundation of putting an End to all future Tumult and disorder.”

Such hopes for peace were to be rudely disappointed; the vainglorious and war-minded Governor Tryon did not delay in telling Frohock and Martin that their plan was unconstitutional and was vetoed; he had already with the consent of his Council prepared to “raise forces to march into the settlements of the Insurgents,” and to impose upon them such a peace as he approved—“upon honorable and constitutional principles,” far more stable than that provided for by the Convention at Salisbury. In other words, Tryon wanted war, not peace, and was determined to have war. He said, in part: <sup>21</sup>

. . . The mode . . . of Your Agreement with the insurgents, by including Officers who are amenable only for their public conduct to the Tribunal of their Country is unconstitutional, Dishonorable to government and introductive of a practice the most dangerous to the peace and happiness of society. On the 18th of last month it was determined by consent of his Majesty’s Council to raise

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<sup>21</sup> For Tryon’s reply to Frohock and Martin in full, see *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, p. 545.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Forces to march into the settlements of the Insurgents in order to restore peace to the country upon honorable Terms and constitutional principles. This measure is not intended to impede nor has it the least Reference to the Agreement between you gentlemen and the Regulators tho' it is expected in the execution of it more stability will be added to our government, than by the issue of Convention ratified at Salisbury.

It was not until April 15, 1771, five weeks before the Battle of Alamance, that the first news of it was brought to Bethabara by John Armstrong, a merchant, and a friend of Tryon's who had marched with him to Hillsboro in September, 1768, and was recorded in the *Bethabara Diary* as follows: <sup>22</sup>

Mr. John Armstrong returned from New Bern. He had spoken with the Governor, and reported from him that the new Governor, Josiah Martin, destined for North Carolina, had landed in New York with 2000 Regulars from England, which he intended to bring to this Province; that the present Governor would enlist many more soldiers, who would join the others, and together they would march against the Regulators in Orange. Gov. Tryon had published a Manifesto, citing some sixty of the Regulators to appear before him in May, and any who do not answer are declared to be Traitors. The Governor will send one Company from Orange to Hillsborough, and one to Salisbury, to protect the General Court at those places. He also intends to come with a Company to Bethabara, and remain here until the division of the County takes place. Moreover he has summoned all former Sheriffs, and ordered them to collect all back taxes with an armed hand. In short he does not wish to give up his office until peace has been restored, and he can so deliver it to his successor. Mr. Armstrong told this confidentially to the Brn. Marshall and Bagge, but it was evident that it was known also to Sam Wagner, who was here today, and behaved very badly, threatening to strike Br. Meyer, but not daring to do it, knowing that he would be seized by others in the Tavern.

This statement, having appeared only recently, i. e., in 1922, in other than manuscript form, probably has not generally been considered by those who have written of the

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<sup>22</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 454.

## BAPTISTS AND REGULATORS

War of the Regulation. It is invaluable, however, in that it reveals certain aspects of the affair and the part played in it by Tryon. First, the information in it came directly from Governor Tryon, and is a statement of plans and purposes not known on the Yadkin before 1771. It was made at a time when Tryon had already been appointed governor of New York and was, therefore, ending his term of office in North Carolina. It reveals that it was Tryon's intention to use well trained, disciplined regulars of the British army, at that time more feared than any other soldiers in the world, to crush those whom he regarded as rebels and insurgents. The inference that he himself requested the 2,000 soldiers which is apparent here is strengthened by a later entry in the *Bethabara Diary*:<sup>23</sup> "We hear that Gen. Waddel has gone to Salisbury to enlist men for the Governor; it appears that the Governor has not received regular soldiers from England." Thus it appears that if his plans had not miscarried, the first regular British soldiers to be used in the war against Americans would have fired their volleys against the settlers of North Carolina who protested against the wrongs inflicted upon them by the corruptness of Tryon's administration, rather than against those at Lexington who stood against the British and fired the "shot heard around the world."

It should be noted, too, that those cited by the Manifesto who did not appear before Tryon in May were to be declared traitors. This was done by virtue of the "Bloody Johnston Act" recently passed by friends of the Governor in the Assembly, chief among whom was Samuel Johnston, its author. This act is generally agreed to be the most cruel and disgraceful act ever voted by an English legislative body and was declared by the English government itself to be unfit for any part of the British Empire.

In other words, Tryon reported to Armstrong that he

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<sup>23</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 455, entry for May 1.

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was planning by the use of the most formidable troops he could assemble and the most stringent means available to him to subdue the settlers who were untrained, unarmed, and incapable of resisting armed warfare, an action which could only result in their slaughter. If Martin, the new governor, was convinced that Tryon needed armed forces to make North Carolina a safe place for a British governor, he soon changed his mind. He did not bring any British regulars to support Tryon, and after he himself became governor he learned that the settlers were peacefully disposed, a decent people, who needed only relief from the abuses of Tryon's regime.





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## IV

### TRYON'S WAR AGAINST THE BAPTISTS

At the Battle of Alamance, May 16, 1771, Tryon defeated the only armed force that ever opposed him. The Regulators were dispersed and never took up arms again. But for Governor Tryon the war did not end with that battle. By winning it he had not smitten and crushed the Baptists which was probably one of his chief objects. Alamance is not in a Baptist neighborhood, and Morgan Edwards insists that very few Baptists fought in that battle. But in the regions immediately to the west, at Sandy Creek, the Jersey Settlement, Abbott's Creek, and on the Yadkin River north and south of Shallow Fords, on Deep Creek and Hunting Creek, and Belews Creek, was a larger Baptist population than in any other area of like size in the entire world. In Tryon's formula these settlers being Baptists were also Regulators. He had many reasons for regarding them with much disfavor and with hostility which he often expressed. He now had opportunity to strike at them, to deal them a crippling blow, and he took advantage of it.

After the Battle of Alamance, Tryon began his campaign through the Baptist neighborhoods to the west in which he used his entire force—more than twice as many armed soldiers as he had used at Alamance. To a greater extent than before he laid waste plantations; he made more captives and brought many more in chains to Hillsboro for trial as outlaws and traitors, and brought sorrow and grief

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to more wives and mothers, and brought about the greatest dispersal of Baptist populations of which there is record—a dispersal used by God to produce other Baptists of the same type, white and colored, in such numbers that today they count among their numbers more than half of the Baptists in the world.

We have read above, in his letter to Frohock and Martin, of Tryon's determination to "raise Forces to march into the settlements of the Insurgents." Now follows some account of the chief events connected with his encampment and operations in these settlements, three in number, each of which proved to be an important Baptist neighborhood—Sandy Creek, the Jersey Settlement, and Bethabara, which was near Shallow Fords and the work of the Baptists across the Yadkin.

On leaving Alamance the first Baptist center to which Tryon led his army and encamped was Sandy Creek, then, in many respects, the greatest Baptist center in the world. Of it Morgan Edwards, writing in 1772, said:<sup>1</sup>

. . . Very remarkable things may be said of this church, worthy of a place in Gillis's book, and inferior to no instance he gives of the modern success of the gospel in different parts of the world. It began with sixteen souls, and in a short time increased to six hundred and six. . . . Sandy Creek is the mother of all the Separate Baptists. From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them that published it. The church in seventeen years (1755-1772) has spread her branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi, southward as far as Georgia, eastward as far as the Potomac; it, in seventeen years, is become mother, grandmother and greatgrandmother to forty-two churches, from which sprang 125 ministers, many of which are ordained, and support the sacred character as well as any set of clergy in America.

Morgan Edwards also tells that in 1758 Stearns organized

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<sup>1</sup> See the *North Carolina Historical Review*, VII, p. 365 f., for "Morgan Edwards' Materials towards a History of the Baptists in the Province of North Carolina," by G. W. Paschal. The portion quoted here is found at page 384 f.

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the Sandy Creek Association, which until 1770 held all its meetings at Sandy Creek Church. These meetings were attended regularly by the many Separate Baptist preachers of the Carolinas and Virginia and were among the largest and most important Baptist meetings taking place in the world at that time.<sup>2</sup>

In 1771, around Sandy Creek in all directions, in the territory of the present counties of Chatham and Randolph, Baptists and Quakers were numerous, but the Baptists more numerous than the Quakers. Among the Baptist families already there and later well known were the Brays, Welshes, Wombles, Dorsetts, Brooks, Hicks, Moffitts, Cheeks, Dowds, Marshes, Hackneys, Kivetts, Stanleys, Browers, Duncans, Teagues, many of whose names are found in the Regulator Petitions. Though Sandy Creek and Haw River were the only regularly organized churches, there were several meeting houses and many preaching places on Rocky River, Tick Creek, Bear Creek, Cane Creek, Hickory Mountain, Brush Creek, Fall Creek, where the Separate Baptists preachers regularly preached. Here and there in this section were Quaker families, some of them in segregated neighborhoods. Quakers and Baptists alike were industrious farmers, usually with plantations of moderate size. So many were Regulators and likewise Baptists that Tryon found

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<sup>2</sup> Charles E. Taylor, *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 104: "In the midst of the church Mr. Stearns closed his valuable life. . . . When first confined to his bed, his mind depressed, but the darkness was of short duration. He was made to suffer much and protractedly in body, but his soul was joyful in the God of his salvation. Having preached to others the Saviour of sinners, he found Him in the trying hour precious to his soul. On the 29th of November, 1771, his happy spirit was dismissed to take its place among the holy and good in a better world. His body was interred near the meeting house in which he had so often spoken the word of God.

"Says a more recent writer, (Hufham), 'He was undoubtedly one of the greatest ministers that ever presented Jesus to perishing multitudes. Had he been a Romish priest, he would long since have been canonized and declared the patron saint of Carolina. Fervent supplications would have ascended and stately churches would have been dedicated to the holy and blessed Shubal Stearns, the apostle of North Carolina and the adjacent states'."

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much for his soldiers to do while he was encamped at Sandy Creek. Traditions long remained of the operations of the groups of horsemen that came to this section to carry out the Governor's orders—fine, well dressed gentlemen, proud and haughty, the Governor's friends from around Wilmington and New Bern, who appropriated food and supplies wherever they could find them in smoke houses and spring houses, and got a fat calf now and then, and insisted that any little wheat they found in granaries before harvest when wheat supplies were short should be carried to the nearest mill for grinding into flour which was then carried on to camp. Rarely, a ticket, which usually proved worthless, was given in payment. There is no record or tradition that at Sandy Creek Tryon's "fine gentlemen" engaged in atrocities, such as burning barns and laying waste plantations, and making prisoners and bringing them bound to Tryon's tent, as they did at the encampments further west. It is to be assumed that the reason for the milder treatment of the Baptists of this region—that is, merely extracting promises and obtaining signed papers from them—was that Stearns had dissuaded them from joining the armed forces that opposed Tryon at Alamance. Be that as it may, the Sandy Creek Baptists were not appeased by the treatment they received while the Governor was making Sandy Creek the seat of his operations against them. They found his tender mercies cruel. Soon afterwards, they were leaving their homes for the Holston River and other places beyond the reach of the friends of Tryon. Writing a year later, Morgan Edwards says:

It (the Sandy Creek Church) is reduced from six hundred and six to fourteen souls. The cause of this dispersion is the abuse of power which too much prevailed in the Province, and caused the inhabitants at last to rise up in arms, and fight for their privileges. But being routed, May 16, 1771, they despaired of seeing better times, and therefore quitted the Province. It is said that 1,500 families departed since the Battle of Alamance, and to my knowl-



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edge a great many more are only waiting to dispose of their plantation in order to follow them. This is to me an argument that their grievances were real, and their oppressions great, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary.

Dr. Hufham's brief account is:<sup>3</sup>

The Governor now had an opportunity to smite the Baptists. It was skillfully and cruelly done. Marching his army to Sandy Creek he encamped for a week, . . . levying contributions and terrorizing the neighborhood. Ruin fell on the church, from which it has not recovered to this day (1898). Heavy requisitions for beeves and flour were made on Haw River, Deep River, Rocky River, Grassy Creek, Abbott's Creek and the Forks of the Yadkin.

Dr. Hufham also indicated that it was at this time that Tryon's men engaged in "destroying the home and desolating the farm of Husband," but this was done some months before by Edmund Fanning and his friends who rode on a night raid from Hillsboro for the purpose. Seemingly, they planned to seize Husband, but he escaped them and had since made his home in the New Garden neighborhood. There again he had had his house burned and his fields ruined, though he himself again escaped. The record in the *Bethabara Diary* for May 24, 1771,<sup>4</sup> is: "The man said that the Governor was still in the neighborhood of the homes of Herrman Husband and Hunter, whose houses and fields he had ruined, and also those of certain others who are outlawed."

Tryon's encampment at Sandy Creek was seemingly of great damage to the cause of religion and for a hundred years effectively checked Baptist development in that section. But, although there the Baptist had been dealt a stunning blow, as is now known the emigration of the Baptists to the West was the beginning of a great Baptist development in the territory to which they proceeded.

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<sup>3</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 459.

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On leaving Sandy Creek Tryon led his army further westward and encamped on the plantation of Captain Benjamin Merrill, which according to Sheets<sup>5</sup> was "some four miles south of Lexington, N. C., and about two miles east from Jersey church," and, according to the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*<sup>6</sup> only thirty miles from Bethabara. Here Tryon and the divisions of the army with him were joined by the troops under General Waddell and Colonel Fanning, and "so the whole army was together."<sup>7</sup> This was now a considerable body of troops, probably the largest gathered in North Carolina before the Civil War and, according to the most conservative estimates of the Moravians, numbered 3,000 to 3,500.<sup>8</sup>

Indications are that it was in accord with a well considered plan that the Governor assembled the three divisions of his army for the final operations of his campaign against the Regulators and the Baptists near the Jersey Baptist Church. It was central for Baptist populations in all directions—eastwardly on Abbott's Creek and the Uwharrie and Carraway Creek; westwardly in the Forks of the Yadkin and on Dutchman's Creek and Hunting Creek, Deep Creek and up the Yadkin as far as Mulberry Fields, all that section west of the Yadkin where the three branches of the Shallow Fords Church, of which Joseph Murphy was minister, were having a "remarkable" development, while there were other Baptist neighborhoods northward on Town Fork, Belews Creek and the Dan River. And from the camp at Jersey Settlement detachments of troops might easily make their way to the troublesome Baptist settlements in Anson County on

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<sup>5</sup> *A History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 159.

<sup>6</sup> II, p. 620.

<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 620.

<sup>8</sup> At the battle of Alamance Tryon is said to have had under his command 1,600 men. Before he was joined by Fanning and Waddell it was reported (*Records of the Moravians*, I, p. 460) at Bethabara that as he was crossing the Uwharrie, "His army now consists of about 3,000, among them 100 gentlemen of distinction." On June 3, (p. 449) the *Friedburg Diary* reports the number as 3,500.

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Little River and Rocky River. In the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* it is told that at this time Tryon was preparing to send troops across the Catawba to quell any rebellious settlers in the new county of Tryon where the records show that the Baptists were already gathering churches. It is clear that having been trained as a soldier Tryon thought of all things as a soldier; saw enemies where there were no enemies, as at Hillsboro in September, 1768; and with his perfervid imagination peopled the settlements west of the Yadkin, and in particular those in which Baptists were numerous, with rebellious and insurgent people whom he believed it his duty, as it was in accord with his ambitious purposes, to crush by force of arms. Such is the rational, if incomplete, explanation of why Tryon, after his appointment to the coveted place of Governor of New York, should have begun a bloody war against the people of North Carolina.

It was in the last days of May, 1771, that the Governor brought all three divisions of his army to camp in the Jersey Settlement. Tryon's own division doubtless consisted chiefly of those he had recently enlisted in the eastern counties of the Province, and also those whom, with the help of the Presbyterian ministers, he had enlisted in several Presbyterian neighborhoods. Accompanying him, also, was a considerable group not of regularly enlisted men, but of volunteers. These were with the army as it was crossing the Uwharrie, and are referred to as "100 gentlemen of distinction."<sup>9</sup> In Br. Marshall's report of the army when it had come to Bethabara on June 4, 1771, these volunteers are represented as more numerous. We read:<sup>10</sup> "I believe the Saviour wished to draw all the leading men of the country to our neighborhood at one time, for nearly all were there as volunteers in the Governor's army."

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<sup>9</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 460.

<sup>10</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 620.

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The presence of so many volunteers of this kind with Tryon's troops in these Baptist neighborhoods indicates the true nature of this campaign. These volunteers were Tryon's friends, socially, politically and religiously, and they shared his bitter animosity to Baptists whose zealous activity had made his plans for an Established Church ineffectual. In order that readers may have a better understanding of these volunteers who came to Tryon's aid as he was engaged in his religious war in these predominantly Baptist neighborhoods on the Yadkin, I am giving below in a footnote an account of them by Dr. J. D. Hufham, well qualified to write it, since he was born and reared in eastern North Carolina of a prominent colonial family and is a recognized authority on its history.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Hufham also makes it clear

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<sup>11</sup> "It is strange that really honest and able men should have been silent in the Legislature and elsewhere as to the corruption and the oppressions of which the Regulators complained. Still more, that they should have voted for the Johnston bill, which horrified even George III, as contrary to the British Constitution and unfit for any part of the British dominions. Strangest of all that these men should have marched under Tryon to Alamance; and after the battle have followed him around the shameful campaign as far west as Salisbury and back to Hillsboro, sharing the robberies and the terrorism of which the women and children were the unoffending victims, and witnesses of the inhuman spectacle of prisoners, good men and true, driven in chains through the towns and villages like brute beasts; and that they should have participated without compunction or protest in the barbarities which at Hillsboro closed the campaign, the court a travesty of justice, Tryon bullying and lecturing the judges, and seeking to add every element of horror to the executions.

"Various explanations have been given by the descendants and apologists of these men. It has been said that Tryon exercised some sort of strange fascination over them. It is absurd. Samuel Johnston, John Harvey and others were not the men to be hypnotized by Tryon or the mythical Esther Wake. It has been alleged that they were ignorant of the nature and extent of the abuses and oppressions which led to the Regulation. It is also untrue. They were well aware of the dishonesty and extortion of the treasurers, sheriffs, clerks and other office holders; either that or they were thoroughly and incurably stupid, a thing which no one believes. Not a lawyer among them but knew, as well before as after King George passed upon it, that the Johnston bill in some of its features was contrary to the Constitution as it was to every instinct of justice and humanity.

"The real reason is that these men constituted what may be called a 'court party,' insignificant in numbers, but strong through its hold on the machinery of government. It had been taking shape from the beginning of the colony, and had developed rapidly after the proprietorship passed into the hands of the King. Its tendencies were strengthened by the introduction of slavery. It looked to the King through the Governor for office,



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that Tryon had difficulty in finding men for his army even where his friends were relatively numerous.<sup>12</sup>

A second division of Tryon's army assembled at Merrill's plantation was that under the command of Col. Edmund Fanning. It seems to have consisted of a part of the soldiers who fought at Alamance who were assigned to him after that battle for this campaign.<sup>13</sup> Statements both by Morgan Edwards and in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* indicate that this division was made up

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honor and promotion. It was aristocratic in its tastes and aspirations, more English than American. It had no sympathy with the common people, and turned with aversion and alarm from the thought of a government by the people, for the people.

"General Howe, during his campaign in Virginia, corresponding with Governor Dunmore about the exchange of prisoners, refused to receive in exchange for British soldiers some citizens held by the Governor as prisoners, calling them 'mere peasants.' Samuel Johnston was a man of Scotch thrift, of fair ability and good education, a patriot after his fashion and of incorruptible honesty, but without any conception of popular rights, and as late as 1802, without faith in popular government. In the Spring Convention of 1776 he stood in the way of the framing of a Constitution, and he and others of his kind had to be eliminated before the work could be done. To these and others like them, the Regulation was simply an uprising of the peasantry, to be ruthlessly stamped out. . . .

"This is the only reasonable explanation of the attitude of those who are called the 'leading men' of that time toward the Regulation. Their offices, their tastes, their aspirations, their hopes and their fears bound them to the royal government; and viewing characters and events through this medium, they were not prepared for the crisis which was on them. A new dispensation was at hand. But they were children of the old dispensation, and did not dream that it could ever pass away." J. D. Hufham, *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, pp. 156-159.

<sup>12</sup> His account of the general unwillingness to serve under Tryon in this war is as follows: "In Dobbs County, one of the Sheriff's posse had been killed while trying to arrest a Regulator, and even in Caswell found difficulty in raising the quota of volunteers for the campaign of Alamance. In Duplin County it was hard to get fifty men of any sort and they were not commanded by a Duplin man. The disaffection was so great that after the campaign Tryon sent John Ashe to administer some sort of oath to the people. The men of Duplin refused to take the oath and sent Ashe away. From old Albemarle and the adjacent counties no troops were sent, and the treasurer of the district declined to honor the Governor's requisition for funds. The Governor at last asked for only a few gentlemen as volunteers from that region, but they did not come. Halifax was pervaded with the spirit of the Regulators, and there was much of it in Edgecombe. In Bute County, at a general muster, the commanding officer called for volunteers. They broke ranks without orders and left the officers alone." *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 159.

<sup>13</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, p. 588.

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wholly or in part of horsemen, sometimes called "dragoons," who were sent through the settlements to burn, pillage, rob and round up and bring to camp those charged with being dangerous Regulators. Br. Marshall says<sup>14</sup> "most of the cavalry were out on various expeditions." Further statements in the *Moravian Records* leave no doubt that these horsemen were riding through the settlements just across the Yadkin to seize Regulators and bring them as prisoners to Tryon's camp, among them Abraham Creson (Crisson) who was a regular attendant on the services at Mr. Murphy's church, and who was sent on to Hillsboro by Tryon to be tried for his life. Probably several others of the prisoners named as being from neighborhoods convenient to Mr. Murphy's church were Baptists, but the records are not definite. However, the record is definite and clear that Tryon's chief lieutenant on this unholy expedition against the Baptists, Col. Edmund Fanning, planned to seize Elder Joseph Murphy, who had led in the great Baptist development in this section. On June 3, the day before Tryon came to Bethabara, Br. Traugott Bagge, who had charge of the business interests of the Moravians, noted the presence of Fanning with his corps in the vicinity of Murphy's home.<sup>15</sup> The continuation of this story is found in the two slightly different but complementary statements of Morgan Edwards. The first, already given in Volume I, at page 226 f., reads:

The vile Col. F.....n accused him (Murphy) of aiding and abettin the Regulation whereof he was as clear as any man whatsoever; yet a party of horses was sent to seize him, but could not find him.

The second account, also already published,<sup>16</sup> reads:

He (Murphy) suffered by the regulation tho' he had no hand in

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<sup>14</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 620.

<sup>15</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 461.

<sup>16</sup> *The North Carolina Historical Review*, VII, p. 388.

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it; for a detachment of dragoons entered his house, stole his papers, and a new pair of stockings which were the most valuable things, they saw in his little cot.

It is the general belief of historians that if Murphy had been found at home he would have been sent to Hillsboro, tried for treason, and suffered the same cruel and barbarous death as his fellow Baptist, Benjamin Merrill, who had been seized by the Governor's forces only a few days before. Since Murphy was the best known and most successful Baptist leader in this section, his removal was probably much desired by all those who shared Tryon's enmity against the Baptists on the ground that they were enemies of "Mother Church." Dr. Hufham's statement is: "He could not be found or he would have shared the fate of Merrill."<sup>17</sup>

It is uncertain where Murphy found refuge when he escaped capture. It has been surmised that he went to Virginia. More probable is the generally believed neighborhood tradition that he remained among his friends along the Yadkin to the south of Shallow Fords, and found refuge in what is known as Boone's Cave, a cavern under the bank of the Yadkin near Boone's Ford (later Idol's Ford) and the home of the parents of Daniel Boone on the east side of the Yadkin.

Some well qualified to judge maintain that the general concept and plan for the Regulator war, including this campaign, came from Fanning who, it is said, was superior to Tryon in ability. Dr. Hufham says:<sup>18</sup>

The plan of campaign against the Regulators is familiar and simple enough, the device of a lawyer. In its conception and execution it was the work of Fanning. Tryon has long been credited with talents which he did not possess. He was a soldier by profession and training, in talents mediocre; in civil administration, when left to himself, a bungler. The chief thing recorded of his career in New York, to which he was transferred in the summer of 1771, is

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<sup>17</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, pp. 150-151.

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that he tried to repeat the campaign of Alamance, and failed so signally as to be the theme of ridicule. At an early period of his administration as Governor of North Carolina, he was discovered by Edmund Fanning, who thenceforward held him as firmly as Buckingham held James I, and Charles I. Fanning was a man of superior talents, a graduate of Yale, an astute lawyer, unfeeling and unscrupulous, and far and away the ablest and most adroit political manager in the province during the administration of Tryon. No other name appears so often in the journals of the Legislature in connection with so many important measures. His policy, which was adopted, may be expressed in one word: Delay. His plan as a lawyer was to "put off the trial," meantime irritating the Regulators by every device which skill in the technicalities of the law and rare knowledge of men could devise.

The commander of the third division that joined in forming Tryon's army at Merrill's plantation was General Hugh Waddell. None who knows Waddell's record in North Carolina would disagree with Dr. Hufham's statement:<sup>19</sup>

. . . Hugh Waddell was least blame-worthy of all who had a part in that brief war. One inclines to think tenderly of the brave and impulsive young Irishman. He was a soldier and Tryon was his commander-in-chief; he had to obey.

The *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*<sup>20</sup> indicate clearly that neither General Waddell nor the soldiers under his command had any heart for this war; they sought to avoid it. This is suggested by several statements, among which is this:<sup>21</sup> "Several Regulators passed through, and reported that their party and Gen. Waddell had signed an agreement, in accordance with which the General had withdrawn his troops across the Yadkin and the Regulators were going home." On hearing that the Regulators were going home, many in Waddell's corps sought release, and when Tryon had come and was warring in their neighborhood, some deserted.

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<sup>19</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 164.

<sup>20</sup> I, pp. 455, 456; II, p. 652.

<sup>21</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 456, *Bethabara Diary* for May 11, only five days before the Battle of Alamance.



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Though it is not told who represented the Regulators in the agreement with Waddell,<sup>22</sup> it was in all probability Benjamin Merrill, since in an address he is reported to have made from the gallows is found the statement: "After I had enlisted under the banner of the Regulators I was ever after pressed to be made a leading man among them; and was one of the number who opposed Col. Waddell with his troops." <sup>23</sup>

It was in the last week in May, 1771, that the three divisions of Tryon's army, numbering all told 3,000 to 3,500 men, had all got together on Merrill's plantation, near the Jersey Baptist Church. The following account of the activities of this great army in this section, which continued only for about a week, is based for the most part on the day-by-day entries in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* during this period.

About May 27 or 28, Tryon crossed the Uwharrie. Following a plan observed both here and later when he was on the Yadkin near Wachovia, he sent a squadron of cavalry a day's march in advance, probably under the command of Col. Edmund Fanning. When they came to the plantation of Captain Benjamin Merrill they seemingly caught him by surprise. At any rate, they arrested him and immediately sent him away, the members of his family knew not where, but doubtless to Hillsboro where, before June 16, he was tried and heard the sentence of death pronounced against him in these words by Chief Justice Howard:

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<sup>22</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 652: "When the Regulators heard that Gov. Tryon, with a considerable body of Militia, was marching into this territory to suppress them they became very angry, although they had no proper organization or officers with which to oppose him. . . . Some hundred of them, though without a proper leader, succeeded, in the beginning of May, 1771, in forcing General Wadle and some Militia to abandon a position on the north side of the Yadkin, where he had intended to join Gov. Tryon, and to retreat eleven or twelve miles to the south side." This is an extract from the Bagge Manuscript, which appears in the work cited at pages 650-654.

<sup>23</sup> See Vol. I, p. 364, footnote.

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I must now close my afflicting duty by pronouncing upon you the awful sentence of the law, which is that you, Benjamin Merrill, be carried to the place from which you came; that you be drawn from thence to the place of execution, where you are to be hanged by the neck; that you be cut down while yet alive; that your bowels be taken out while you are yet alive and burnt before your face; that your head be cut off, and your body divided into four quarters, and this to be at his Majesty's disposal; and the Lord have mercy on your soul.<sup>24</sup>

By Tryon's consent, Mrs. Merrill and her eight or ten children were allowed to join him in viewing the terrible execution. Tryon seemingly was greatly affected by it, and following a request of Merrill made just before his death, recommended that the family be permitted to retain possession of Merrill's plantation. Of this, a full account is given by Sheets.<sup>25</sup>

With Merrill at least one other member of his family was arrested. This was a son, nineteen years of age, who was soon released. On May 30, 1771, this son came to Bethabara in search of his father, the record being: <sup>26</sup>

. . . Toward evening Merell, from Abbots Creek, came in much distress, seeking his father, who is outlawed. The Governor has given until the 7th of next month, June, promising pardon to all who submit, outlaws excepted. Merell had been pardoned, and had begged for his father.

On June 3, it was reported at Bethabara that "The troops (Tryon's army) are now at the above mentioned Merell's

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<sup>24</sup> *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, p. 643. It seems well established that such were the words of the sentence pronounced. Dr. Hufham, after quoting it, says, *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 25: "It is the most horrible thing in all the judicial literature of the State." In fact, it is so horrible that apologists for Tryon, while not denying that such was the sentence pronounced, would have people believe that it was not followed in the execution. It was the prescribed way for executing traitors against the King, as on Tryon's indictment other Regulators were declared to be, and executed. In the report that John Armstrong brought to Bethabara on the preceding April 15, Tryon was contemplating making sixty of the leading Regulators subject to such death as traitors.

<sup>25</sup> *A History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 160f.

<sup>26</sup> *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 460.

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plantation which has been laid waste." The nature of this devastation is indicated by the statement of Br. Marshall,<sup>27</sup> the able Moravian minister, made at the same time: "Those who refused the terms (prescribed by Tryon) had their houses burned and their fields ruined." It is easy at any time to apply a torch, and at this time the harvest was near, and to ruin the ripening grain it was only necessary for the horsemen to turn their horses to pasture on the grain fields, which they regularly did. However, the burning of houses and the ruin of fields were only auxiliary to the main purpose of Tryon's campaign as he planned and directed it.

On coming to the Merrill plantation before June 2, and later on coming to Bethabara, Tryon set up his Governor's tent, large enough for meetings of his suite of about thirty chief officers.<sup>28</sup> Here he planned operations, gave orders, heard reports, complaints and petitions, and received delegations and groups of friends. In prosecution of his chief purpose he sent the cavalry groups to ride through the surrounding neighborhoods where Baptists had their homes, and where the horsemen made free to forage, pillage, rob and plunder, and to satisfy their hunger by depleting smoke houses, kitchens, pantries and cupboards.

The chief mission, however, on which these horsemen were sent in all directions from Tryon's tent was to make and bring in prisoners. It is not known in what way it was determined which of the farmers should be seized; possibly, they were designated as dangerous outlaws by Tryon himself on information furnished by sheriffs of his appointing and other friends. Probably, however, the horsemen were at liberty to decide for themselves whom of the settlers they would seize and carry as prisoners to camp. At any rate, in the few days of their encampment on Merrill's planta-

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<sup>27</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 619.

<sup>28</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, pp. 461, 463.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

tion they brought in not fewer than forty prisoners bound or chained, as is indicated by a statement<sup>29</sup> with reference to them as they were seen on the march from the Jersey Settlement to Bethabara on June 4: "The forty prisoners were bound two and two, and were a pitiful sight as they marched in." That the usual method of binding these prisoners was with chains, is indicated by such statements as this:<sup>30</sup> "Some prisoners were released, . . . but Abraham Creson remained in chains." The taking of prisoners was continued after Tryon had changed his camp to Bethabara. On June 5, the day after encampment there, the record is: "Today again about thirty Regulators were brought in as prisoners." In all, an unknown number were taken. They were kept under a guard in a shed, until June 9, the day of Tryon's departure, when he sent them off, probably to Hillsboro for trial.<sup>31</sup>

It is to be observed that the prisoners were already classed as outlaws and traitors and subject to punishment by a traitor's death; they did not have the power to accept the terms of pardon offered in the various Proclamations of Tryon, of which a copy was first brought to Bethabara, and probably to the Jersey Settlement, on June 1.<sup>32</sup> Like Benjamin Merrill they were already adjudged to be traitors, and like him seemingly doomed to suffer the horrible death by which traitors were executed. Apparently for no other reason than that they were thought to be able men among the Regulators, Tryon's dragoons had seized them unresisting in their homes and brought them to his camp where they were held with the prospect of being sent to Hillsboro for trial and death. They were in extreme peril. Naturally their friends, and in particular their wives and mothers, were greatly alarmed and tried to save them. Their one

<sup>29</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 462.

<sup>30</sup> *Record of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 465.

<sup>31</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 466.

<sup>32</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 460.



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hope was to appeal to Tryon, and they did just that, but failed in their efforts to move the inflexible Governor, as is recorded in the *Bethabara Diary* for June 3, 1771: <sup>33</sup>

Friedrich related that several wives had knelt at the Governor's feet pleading for their husbands and children, but he had turned them away saying that it was no longer in his power to pardon them and they would have to stand trial.

In explanation of this statement it is to be noted that on June 1, 1771, Friedrich and Joseph Müller had been sent from Bethabara, with two deserters from Waddell's army, to Tryon's camp at Merrill's plantation ("which had been laid waste") and that on June 2 "the Governor had talked for two hours with Friedrich," who was, therefore, in a position to make a first hand report of the wives and mothers kneeling at Tryon's feet.<sup>34</sup>

On June 4, the divisions of Tryon and Waddell arrived at Salem and Bethabara, Tryon himself, described as "His Excellency William Tryon, Esqur, Captain General and Governor in Chief and over the Province of North Carolina," led his troops to their camp in a triumphant procession. The event is described as follows by Br. Marshall: <sup>35</sup>

... but on the 4th of June we learned that the Governor and his entire army were already half way to Bethabara, and would arrive that day. We had barely had time for a brief conference when we heard that he had reached Salem, and had stopped to look around and take some food, and was now nearing here. We rode out to

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<sup>33</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 461.

<sup>34</sup> On the return of the Müllers to Bethabara on June 3, the Governor sent two letters by them. "One was to Br. Marshall, saying 'that he heard that Herman Husband had been seen in our town, and if one of our Brethren would capture him and bring him to camp he would receive £100 and 1000 acres of land as a reward.' The other was to Br. Bonn, and asked him to send 10,000 lbs. flour from our settlement to his camp at Pugh's place." (*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 461.) Husband was alert and was never captured. Bonn promptly responded, but sent corn meal, not flour. Br. Marshall's statement, II, p. 620, is: "Ten thousands pounds of meal were ordered from us, to be paid for at a low price."

<sup>35</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 620.

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meet him, and our trombonists greeted him a short distance outside the town, preceding the *chariot* in which he sat until he reached the lodging prepared for him. After eating, we rode with him to show him two fields, fifteen acres, suggested for the camp, of which he approved; our fifty-acre meadow, just ready for the hay-harvest, had to be used for 300 horses (fortunately most of the cavalry were out on various expeditions), but we were paid cash for the damage done.<sup>36</sup> Such strict discipline was maintained that everybody wondered, but orders had been issued to the whole army before our Tract was entered, and they were rigidly enforced. . . . All were pleased, and found our simple life a charm which was missing elsewhere, especially in the friendliness with which our Brethren and Sisters served every one,—and indeed there was plenty of opportunity for this, for since the world has stood there have probably never been so many men together here.

At Bethabara, Tryon continued to exercise his functions as general and commander-in-chief in an impressive way. He set up his tent in the Square, and from it directed operations; there he held meetings with his staff of thirty officers, heard congratulatory resolutions from delegations of the Brethren,<sup>37</sup> and entertained groups of them at meals. The troops were exercised, “going through all the maneuvers they used in the battle with the Regulators and they saluted with gun and cannon until everything trembled.”<sup>38</sup>

It was in the general’s tent, also, that Tryon sat in judgment on the Regulators from the neighborhoods outside of Wachovia, some coming of their own accord to ask pardon and others, as related above, being brought in as prisoners by the roving dragoons. Among those brought in in chains was Abraham Creson, who lived at no great distance from the home and church of Rev. Joseph Mur-

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<sup>36</sup> The amount paid for pasturing in the meadow was 75 Pounds. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 467.

<sup>37</sup> The Brethren were at times almost obsequious in their attention to the Governor and his party. For example: “. . . the four Brn. Marshall, Graff, Utley, and Bagge, appeared before His Excellency, and Marshall read the following Address, in the name of the Unity of Brethren in Wachovia. At each mention of *His Majesty*, or *His Excellency*, the four Brethren bowed profoundly. . . .” *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 463f.

<sup>38</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 463.

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phy, and the records indicate that he and his family were associated with Murphy in religious work in the section. Doubtless, the many who were captured at this time realized their peril. "Many came to Marshall and other Brethren begging for our good word but we must move carefully in the matter."<sup>39</sup> Notwithstanding this display of caution, the kindly attitude of the Brethren toward their neighbors with whom they had dealings and to whom their missionaries had frequently preached, probably tempered the hostility of Tryon toward many of the prisoners and nearly all were released. At any rate, there is no record of execution of any prisoner taken in the operation around Bethabara.

On June 8, General Waddell and the greater number of troops left Bethabara. The next day the Governor, having sent the prisoners in chains ahead of him, also left. About July 1 he left North Carolina never to return. With the departure of Tryon, his unnecessary, punitive, and vindictive religious war against the Baptists may be said to have come to an end. His successor, Governor Josiah Martin, made friends with both the Moravians and the Baptists. But the war had a lasting effect on the Baptist work. Fifteen hundred families migrated because of it. Baptist work throughout the area was disrupted because of it. And the friendly relations between the Moravians and Baptists were jeopardized.<sup>40</sup>

However, all was not lost. The migration was, in fact, the beginning of a great Baptist development in another area, and while for a hundred or more years the work in the locality from which it originated was virtually at a standstill, in the other localities which felt the Governor's wrath the Baptist leaders were not intimidated, but emerged after his departure to continue their good work. And though

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<sup>39</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 463.

<sup>40</sup> "The people of the neighborhood speak evil of us, saying that we induced the Governor to come here." *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 468.

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temporarily Baptists and Moravians were not in complete accord, in a few months the Baptist preachers on the one hand and the Moravian missionaries on the other were again working and co-operating to bring religious enlightenment to the people who so recently had felt the iron hand of military power.





## TIMBER RIDGE

We now turn to trace the further history of the Timber Ridge Baptist Church. Br. Soelle records that on his last visit to Mr. Murphy's church, March 5, 1773, he found Mr. Murphy, the Baptist minister, preparing to move elsewhere; in fact, Murphy did move, made his home further up Deep Creek and for the remainder of his life worked for the most part among the people on Deep Creek. But though Murphy had moved, he probably continued for some years to be pastor of the Timber Ridge Baptist Church, baptizing new members and administering the Lord's Supper, but doing the greater part of his preaching in the Deep Creek section, where he seems to have gathered an arm of the church at Timber Ridge, which early in 1777 was constituted into the church of Deep Creek, of which church Murphy became pastor at its constitution. At that time he ceased to be pastor to Timber Ridge. Some further account of Murphy and his work at Deep Creek will be given later.

Only rarely after his departure from his home near the Yadkin is there any record of Murphy's being at Timber Ridge, and that church had to find its preachers wherever it was able. Moravian missionaries, successors of Br. Soelle, most often are mentioned as preaching to the Timber Ridge Church after the departure of Murphy for Deep Creek. Br. Soelle, whom "Mr. Murphy welcomed to his meeting

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

house west of the Yadkin as often as he chose to preach there," had died on May 4, 1773, about the time when Murphy moved to Deep Creek. The religious development at that time around this earliest of Baptist churches west of the Yadkin had been somewhat remarkable. The settlers were eager for preaching and religious instruction. As they had welcomed Soelle, so they welcomed his successors, invited them to preach in their churches, and came in congregations of two hundred or more, more than at any other place, to hear the Moravian missionaries. They were spiritually minded and had real interest in religion, as may be seen in the following from the *Memorabilia* of the Brethren,<sup>1</sup> written near the end of 1773:

About once a month Br. Utley has held services on this side and beyond the Yadkin, especially in Timber Ridge Meeting House, where he has preached the Gospel to two hundred or more hearers. And as he has responded to their invitations, and has visited here and there in their homes, he has seen that the Holy Spirit is working in their hearts.

Though Br. Utley lacked the wisdom of Br. Soelle and soon became unpopular, he continued to preach at Timber Ridge occasionally for about two years, when ill health interrupted his work. He died October 9, 1775.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 752.

<sup>2</sup> In the Salem Diary for April 12, 1774, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 816, nine months after Utley succeeded Soelle, it is recorded: "On his last visit to the Atkin Br. Utley found that the Baptists have openly announced their opposition to his visits in that neighborhood." As early as February 4, 1774, Michael Frey had reported (*op. cit.*, p. 831 f.), "that they all went to the Baptist preachings," and further that "the people had liked Br. Soelle, but did not care for Br. Utley." One reason for the dislike of Utley was probably that being himself well educated and trained in sermon-making, he was intolerant and critical of the uneducated Baptist preachers, as the following record, February 27, 1775, (*op. cit.*, p. 867), may indicate: "Br. Utley returned from a ten-day preaching tour and reported the following. . . . In Timber Ridge there was a large congregation, about 200 being present, among them the Baptist preacher, Murphy, who, so soon as Utley was out of the house, himself preached a sermon, which was largely a repetition of the chief points in Utley's sermon." (As Utley was out of the house one wonders how he knew the character of Murphy's sermon. The records show further that Utley was active in this region in

The successor of Utley as Moravian missionary was Br. Johann Christian Fritz. After a year we have the following record of him: <sup>3</sup>

Br. Fritz serves all Br. Utley's English hearers, in all the places where he was accustomed to preach, and is beloved and successful, but because he cannot baptize he is not regarded as altogether a Minister.

However, his inability to baptize seems not to have made him unacceptable with the Baptists of Timber Ridge. He was popular and, doubtless on their invitation, preached often in their church,<sup>4</sup> where according to the records he never failed to find large and attentive congregations. On his return from his first visit, on which he had preached at Timber Ridge once and at Deep Creek twice, Br. Fritz reported,<sup>5</sup> "There were good congregations everywhere, especially at Deep Creek; the people have had no preaching for a long time, for Murphy and the Bryants have gone in hiding, and have not yet returned." This further in regard to this statement:

It is not probable that Murphy was "in hiding." It is known, however, that the Bryants were having considerable trouble with the Committee of Safety of Rowan County,<sup>6</sup> and that some of them went to Kentucky at this time, where they bought a large tract of land, to which afterwards many settlers went from the section west of Winston-Salem. It is possible that Murphy went with them on this trip; many Baptists were going to Kentucky in these days. There is no evidence that Murphy had any reason to be

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baptizing infants, against which, according to Soelle, the Baptists were ready to argue with much zeal. Here was probably the chief reason for Utley's unpopularity.

<sup>3</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, p. 1408.

<sup>4</sup> *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, which, of course, do not take account of all the visits of their missionaries to Timber Ridge, record four or five visits of Utley, the last on February 27, 1775, and seven of Fritz, the first on January 16, 1776, the last on June 4, 1778.

<sup>5</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, p. 1045.

<sup>6</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 880.

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in hiding, though it is possible that some of those who were disappointed in their efforts to seize him during the Regulator troubles were ready to cause him trouble again. Before the end of the year 1776 both the Bryants and Murphy had returned. Murphy resumed his work on Deep Creek and early in 1777 organized the arm of the Timber Ridge Church at Deep Creek into an independent church, of which he became pastor and continued as such until his death about 1816. He was a patriot all his life, and never had Tory sympathies.

Br. Fritz, the Moravian missionary, continued his visits, and preached in the church, if not regularly, at least occasionally. At times the church was visited by a Baptist preacher, and enjoyed his ministrations of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. On the Sunday before June 4, 1778, Elder William Cook of the Dutchman Creek Baptist Church, preached at Timber Ridge by appointment. Br. Fritz was present and as Elder Cook was late in reaching the church, preached before his arrival.<sup>7</sup>

For the next five years, 1778-1783, there is no record of any preaching by either Moravian or Baptist preachers at Timber Ridge. Beginning with 1775 and continuing until the end of the War there was bitter hostility between the Tories and Patriots in this section. "Just now," say the Moravian Records for January, 1777, "the so-called Tories and Liberty men are very hot against each other." This condition continued even after the Tories under Gideon Wright were decisively defeated in the battle in the waters of Shallow Fords in October, 1780. In the last two years of the Revolutionary War the Shallow Fords region was in the path of the marching armies, both Continental and British, which crossed the Yadkin at Shallow Fords. Their foragers and predatory camp followers ranged through the entire region, robbing homes and farms, and making the

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<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, p. 1235.



## TIMBER RIDGE

entire section a scene of turbulence, in which it was impossible for a church to function.

Our earliest documentary record of activity of the Timber Ridge Church in the period following the Revolution is a church letter, dated May 5, 1787, of which Miss Flossie Martin, who by her researches has contributed so much to the history of the Baptists west of the Yadkin, gives the following account:

This was sent me by the Curator of the Historical Society museum and library at Doylestown, Bucks Co., Pa. I quote: "We have a letter of recommendation given by the Baptist Church of Christ at Timberridge in the Province of North Carolina 'to our brother James Eaton being about to remove from these parts to Pensilvania,' dated May 5, 1787, and signed by Peter Eaton, Minister, and Edward Grayham, Jesse Rector and Abenazor Eaton. This document must have fallen into the hands of the Hilltown Baptist Church, Bucks County, Pa., as it is filed with documents referring to that church."

The above indicates that the Timber Ridge Church was functioning and had a pastor well before May, 1787. From the manuscript minutes of the Yadkin Association we learn that it was represented by its pastor, Elder Peter Eaton, in the meetings of that Association while it was an arm of the Strawberry Association in the years 1786-1789, and had a part in the organization of the Yadkin as an independent Association in 1790. It was represented in the meetings of the Association in 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794, 1795, 1799 and 1800, among its delegates being Peter Eaton, James James, Joseph Chafin, Samuel James, James Brewer and John Rich. After 1800 it was not represented. Eaton was having trouble with the members of his church very early, probably before 1800. In 1812, he asked the advice of the Eaton's Church on how to settle them, and it was thought that a reconciliation had been effected between "the ancient church and its former pastor," mistakenly, for in 1814 Eaton asked the advice of the Yadkin Association on the

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same matter. In March, 1814, Eaton was received into the fellowship of "Dutchman's Creek" Church. There is no record that Timber Ridge ever had a regular pastor after 1800.

However, there is much to add to the history of the Timber Ridge Church. Though in another location, it survived as a Baptist church until the year 1832, or later. There is no further record of this church in the minutes of the Yadkin Association, nor is there any local tradition of Baptist activity in connection with this church after the year 1814, when the Baptist meeting house and its grounds at Timber Ridge were sold to the Methodists who after that time have maintained a church there, no longer called Timber Ridge, but Bethlehem. In fact, many living in the neighborhood never heard of a Baptist church named Timber Ridge; for them, as well as for many Baptists, it has passed away without a trace—a church which, with its three branches and rapid development, excited the admiration of Morgan Edwards on his trip in this section in 1771-1772. However, what has been told above is not the full story of this church.

Some account needs to be given of the passing out of existence, and almost out of memory, of this earliest Baptist development in the section west of the Yadkin. It was a gradual process which had begun in the early years of the Regulator troubles. In 1771-1772, according to Morgan Edwards, the Baptists in this section had had a remarkable development. In three years after the beginning of the work, the three branches of Murphy's church had 185 members and were ministering to 350 families. But this great religious work was rudely checked and almost ended at this time, when Governor Tryon had brought his cruel and devastating war to the Baptist neighborhoods on both sides of the Yadkin, with the result that Baptists, as well as other Regulators, according to Morgan Edwards

“despaired of seeing better times, and therefore quitted the Province.” In the records of the Moravians of these years is frequent mention of groups of emigrants going west. This subject has already been discussed in Chapter XVI, Vol. I, “The Exodus of the Baptists,” to which readers are referred. During not only this period but also in that of the Revolution which immediately followed, there is no record of progress in the Timber Ridge section. The indications are that all church services were discontinued. But that religious interest continued is shown by the fact that as early as 1787 the work at Timber Ridge had been resumed and the church reorganized. But it had suffered great losses in membership. On November 1, 1790, according to Asplund, Timber Ridge, including its branch church, Forks of the Yadkin, had a total of only 33 members. Three years later, in 1793, the members at the Forks withdrew and joined in the formation of the independent Forks of the Yadkin Church, probably leaving Timber Ridge with fewer members than before. It might have been expected that in 1793, more than ten years since peace was made, the Timber Ridge Church would have greatly added to the number of its members. In fact, Rev. William Petty’s church, Flat Rock, about thirty miles to the west, constituted in 1783, according to Asplund, already in 1790 had 203 members.

The question arises why there should not have been a like increase in the number of members at the Timber Ridge Church. It was Mr. Murphy’s home church, the first established in all this region. Murphy, the first pastor, merited and enjoyed the respect and friendship of the Moravian missionaries, and welcomed them to his pulpit. The Timber Ridge Meeting House was the place of worship for English settlers west of the Yadkin. Around the church had developed a community actively and enthusiastically interested in the promotion of religion. Here the Moravian mission-

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aries found larger and more attentive congregations than in any other place at which they preached. Why the loss of interest in this religious community, resulting in a few years in the abandonment by the Baptists of the church at this place?

Probably the discontinuance of the Baptist work at Timber Ridge was due to several causes, all powerful. Most powerful of all was the activity of the Methodists in this section, of which one can find account both in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* and in Grissom's *History of Methodism in North Carolina*. According to Grissom, soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, some of the ablest of the Methodist ministers were active in all this section. They had a large development near Clemmons, a few miles south of Wachovia and a few miles east from Timber Ridge, and another large development near Farmington, a few miles to the west. The *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* tell much the same story. In addition to being surrounded on all sides by these aggressive Methodists, the members of the Timber Ridge Church were no longer hearing the persuasive preaching of Separate Baptist preachers. The original Timber Ridge was a Separate Baptist Church, and its minister, Joseph Murphy, was a Separate Baptist and preached the same winning Separate Baptist Gospel of God's love as Shubal Stearns preached with such remarkable success. On its reorganization in 1787 or 1788, Timber Ridge was declared to be a Regular Baptist Church, that is, a church which holds to the Higher Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession so zealously preached by the Primitive Baptist preachers of today. Timber Ridge, newly organized as a Regular Baptist Church, chose as its minister a Regular Baptist strong in his faith, Rev. Peter Eaton, who had recently come to North Carolina, schooled in the Higher Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession, and, as events proved, was intolerant of sermons on God's



love such as Stearns and the Moravian missionaries preached and which had been heard with marked attention by the Timber Ridge congregations. In their desire to hear more such preaching, recalling that both Soelle and Utley had preached with much acceptance, they requested Br. Kramsch, the Moravian missionary, to come and preach for them. Br. Kramsch came in May, 1795, and preached in the Timber Ridge Meeting House, using as a text John 3:16, "God so loved the world." It is recorded that his hearers were attentive, "but he was grieved when immediately after, a Baptist preacher," probably Pastor Eaton, "denied the truth that Christ had died for all men and warned the people not to believe it." A further statement with reference to Br. Kramsch's visit at this time is, "(Br. Kramsch) preached at Timber Ridge, beyond the Yadkin River, where a number of years ago we had what was almost a filial; since then it has been much distracted, and there is as yet no sign of any real new beginning."<sup>8</sup>

These distractions seem to have begun when Eaton became pastor. As a Regular Baptist he attended the meetings of the Yadkin Association in the years before 1790 when it was an arm of the Strawberry Association. During the years when Elder Joseph Murphy was the minister, Timber Ridge and its two branches, Forks of the Yadkin and Mulberry Fields, under the common name Shallow Fords, had belonged to the Sandy Creek Association, a Separate Baptist body. To this same Separate Baptist Association belonged also the Deep Creek Baptist Church, located only a few miles from Timber Ridge, of which Murphy had been minister since its organization in 1777. But though all the relationships of the Baptists around Timber Ridge had been with the Separate Baptists, the new Regular Baptist pastor, Rev. Peter Eaton, was un-

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<sup>8</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, pp. 2526, 2527, 2533, 2696.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

willing for this condition to continue. Representing the Timber Ridge Church as its sole delegate, he brought it into the membership of the Regular Baptist (Yadkin) Association at the organization of that association in 1790.

Probably at the time the members at Timber Ridge were not very much disturbed. A few years before in joint meetings both in Virginia and North Carolina, the Regular and the Separate Baptists had voted that their distinctive names "should be buried in oblivion" and that thereafter the name "Baptist" should be the sufficient and common designation for all of the faith. Probably, the Timber Ridge Baptists cared very little about whether the Association was called "Regular," or "Separate," but doubtless they were concerned about the severance of former ties of friendship and brotherhood with the Separate Baptists and even more concerned that their preacher, Mr. Eaton, did not himself preach sermons on God's love such as the Separate Baptist and Moravian preachers preached, and warned the congregation "not to believe them." Whatever the reason, the evidence is that Rev. Peter Eaton soon lost favor with his church. As early as 1793, members of that branch at the Forks of the Yadkin, some of whose members had been prominent and active, representing Timber Ridge Church as delegates to the association, withdrew and organized an independent church, choosing as its pastor Rev. Benjamin Buckner, a Separate Baptist. This church has until this day been active and progressive. In 1952, it had 373 members and 340 in its Sunday school.

Though all record books of the Timber Ridge Church have been lost, valuable information about the church is found in the records of its neighboring Baptist churches at Eaton's and Bear Creek,<sup>9</sup> and on them the following state-

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<sup>9</sup> Miss Flossie Martin of Mocksville, N. C., has presented well typed copies of the record books of both these churches to the Baptist Collection in the Wake Forest College Library.

ments are based. As early as August 25, 1799, Timber Ridge had no pastor and had none thereafter, but for five years longer the pastorless members provided as well as they were able for the continuation of its work—for the occasional preaching of the gospel, for the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, for the election and ordination of deacons, for cases of discipline, for dismissing members by letter. Like other Baptist churches of the time in a like situation, in its destitution Timber Ridge asked its sister churches for "helps." The churches to which appeals were made responded with good will. Often, not only the pastor but several of the brethren, especially in the protracted meeting season, would go as "helps." So it was in August, 1799, when "on request from the Timber Ridge Church, Eaton's Church agreed to send brethren Lazarus Whitehead (its minister), John Powell, Andrew Hunt, Thos. Estep, and Charles Hunt to assist the above church." Other such requests, meeting with like responses, were made by Timber Ridge to Eaton's in May, 1801, and October, 1802. The record books of these neighboring churches show that for several years after 1800 they received a few members by letter from Timber Ridge; probably a greater number went to Murphy's church at Deep Creek. After 1804 references to Timber Ridge cease in the records of churches west of the Yadkin. But at about this time begins in Purefoy's *History of the Sandy Creek Association* account of a Timber Ridge Church near the Davidson line in Randolph County, "a little to the north of west from Asheboro," which church as the records indicate, was a continuation of the Timber Ridge Church west of the Yadkin.

Before March, 1806, after the distractions at Timber Ridge, which Br. Kramsch thought irremediable in 1795 had continued for ten years or more, the brethren there were visited by Rev. Christopher Vickery whom, in 1790,

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Asplund found associated, as assistant, with Elder George Pope in the care of Abbott's Creek Church and its branches in the counties of Guilford, Rowan and Randolph. In the very earliest days of Murphy's work west of the Yadkin, seemingly before the coming of Soelle to Salem in 1771, Vickery had spent much time in this section, during which he became well acquainted with Br. Marshall and nearly all the founders of Salem in the early days. The only probable reason for the continued presence of Vickery in this section in these early years was to assist Murphy in his work west of the Yadkin. Though never a very able preacher, and in 1768-1771 a mere neophyte, Vickery was a loyal and industrious worker, and doubtless during this time won the friendship and confidence of the Timber Ridge Baptists, which he continued to enjoy. What associations he had with the Timber Ridge brethren during the earlier years until 1806 is not known. Doubtless before that time he had learned of their troubles with their pastor. Being without a pastor they were finding great difficulty in functioning as a church of Christ. After Vickery's visit the course of action followed was this: Effort to maintain regular public worship at the Timber Ridge Church beyond the Yadkin was given up, and the former church organization there was dissolved; its name was given to the new Timber Ridge across the Yadkin, of which Vickery became pastor and remained such for many years. There is no account of who were the members of this second Timber Ridge Church, but it is probable that some from the old church transferred their membership to it. In 1807, a year after Vickery's visit, the Randolph Timber Ridge had become a church of the Sandy Creek Association, with Christopher Vickery and Christopher Swaim as its delegates. It was represented in the meetings of the Sandy Creek Association until 1825; in the list of delegates for most of the years is the name of Vickery, who was the moderator of the Association in 1818,



## TIMBER RIDGE

when it convened at Abbott's Creek. In 1820, the Association met with the church at Timber Ridge, and for the second time Elder C. Vickery was chosen moderator. In 1825, "The churches at Timber Ridge, Abbott's Creek and Jamestown, upon application, were granted letters of dismission to join a new association about to be formed more convenient to them." This was the Abbott's Creek Union Association, organized November 12, 1825. In 1829, the Timber Ridge Church had 45 members, about twice as many as in 1807. In Abbott's Creek Union Association, according to the Circular Letter of 1829, "The utmost harmony, unanimity of sentiment and brotherly affection prevailed." But this happy condition continued only until 1832 when came the "Split." At a meeting of the Association at Mt. Tabor Meeting House, Randolph County, a majority of the churches "declared all who held with the Bible Societies, the Missionary Society or the Sabbath-school out of their fellowship." Timber Ridge was one of the churches not declared out of fellowship, which is probably to be explained by the fact that Rev. Ashley Swaim, the leader of the unholy anti-missionary movement, was formerly prominent in the Timber Ridge Church. But at any rate from this time the Timber Ridge Baptist Church was classed as anti-missionary, lost its former enthusiasm and, according to Sheets, soon became extinct. Such was the ending of the first church established by the Baptists west of the Yadkin.

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## VI

### THE BRANCHES

Timber Ridge, the church which Morgan Edwards calls Shallow Fords, had three branches, of all of which Elder Joseph Murphy, being the only ordained minister among them, was the common minister, and administered the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Edwards says of these branches: "... one near the Fords where is a meeting house; . . . another branch in the forks of the Yadkin, and a third in the *Mulberry-fields*, in each of which places is also a meeting house." He does not indicate that either of these three branches had any pre-eminence over the others, as indeed it did not. Nor does he tell which branch first built its meeting house, though he does erroneously say that the meeting house near Shallow Fords was built in 1769, whereas the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* leave no doubt that it was already built and there were preaching services in it on November 30, 1768. As the only ordained Baptist minister in the section, Elder Joseph Murphy administered the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper in all three branches. Since Murphy's home was near the meeting house which Edwards calls Shallow Fords, he had less need of an assistant there, but at the other branches they were needed, one or more unordained preachers who probably often preached, led in the meetings on Sundays and in prayer meetings, and performed other services. In 1771, Edwards found Murphy

with three assistants, David Allen<sup>1</sup> at the Forks, and John Cates and David Chapman at Mulberry-fields. Already an account has been given of the central branch, Timber Ridge (Shallow Fords); accounts of the other two follow.

The meeting house of one of the branches, the Fork, was in 1771 and still is near where the South Yadkin joins the Yadkin in the southeastern corner of Davie County. From the time of the earliest settlements "The Fork" was the name given to the entire triangular section, two sides of which were the two streams for about fifteen miles above the junction. Its settlement had just begun when the Moravians came to Wachovia in 1753, and in a few years it was occupied by industrious and enterprising pioneer families, some of whose names, as found in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*—Bryant, Jones, Turner, Wilson, Boone, Hunt, Lewis—indicate that they were of the same general character as the settlers further east. Though at first too few to be gathered into churches, the denominational principles of many scattered families were known, the greater number, according to Greene, being Baptists, some Quakers, and among the Germans some Moravians, some Lutherans, and some Dunkards.

The Baptists were active very early in the section near Fork Church. According to Professor J. T. Alderman, who

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<sup>1</sup> Of David Allen, Murphy's assistant at the Forks Church, we have very little information from Baptist writers, but from other sources we learn that he was a man of considerable prominence politically and industrially. Several entries in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, pp. 360, 373, 377, 389, indicate that his home was probably in the Jersey Settlement section, but that he had a saw mill near Bethabara, from which was procured much of the lumber used in the first buildings at Salem, and that his son conducted to the vicinity families from the Jersey Settlement, not improbably to furnish trained labor for the saw mill of his father. That David Allen was not a Regulator is clear from the fact that he was not molested when Tryon with his army was at Benjamin Merrill's plantation in 1771, near the Jersey Settlement, and that Allen was not among the forty prisoners brought in. That he was a Patriot is indicated by the fact that in 1775 he was on the Surry County Committee of Safety, *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, X, p. 251, and the further fact that as early as July, 1781, he had built iron works, and his workmen were exempted from military duty by act of the Legislature, *State Records*, XVII, p. 852, etc.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

in the years 1882-1890 was principal of an academy near the Fork Church,<sup>2</sup>

This was perhaps the first "meeting" place in the "Forks of the Yadkin," with the bare exception of Shallow Fords. As early as 1768, we know that the Baptists had preaching on the beautiful hill-top under the magnificent oaks. At first it was the common ground for all denominations, but as nearly everybody felt more kindly toward the Baptists, the others soon retired from the field. . . . The old house was on exactly the same spot on which the present substantial building stands. Although many references were made to Fork Church, if a church was organized it went down during the period of political upheaval and strife which paralyzed churches everywhere at the close of the Revolution. The church was established or reestablished in June, 1793. The pastors from that time have been: Rev. Benjamin Buckner, 1793-1815; Rev. Joseph Pickler, 1815-1840; Rev. Barton Roby (a few months); Rev. W. H. Hammer, 1841-1844; Rev. Windsor (a few months); Rev. William Turner, 1844-1849; Rev. Thomas Miller, 1849-1851; Rev. Richard Jacks, 1851-1852; Rev. C. W. Bessent, 1852-1866; Rev. John Redwine, 1866-1868; Rev. William Turner, 1870-1885; Rev. C. E. Gower, 1885-1888; Rev. J. N. Stallings, D.D., 1888-1891.

In 1832 the church passed through the anti-mission struggle, which took away nearly half the members. The anti-mission element was very bitter, and although a minority they tried to hold the church, but failed. William Thompson, the clerk, went off with the opposition and declared that the church should never see the old records, and they never did. Since that time the church has continued to grow in strength and usefulness. The present membership is near three hundred. Benjamin Merrell and his son, W. F. Merrell, Esq., are deacons of the church.

In 1952 the church was a member of the South Yadkin Association and had 373 members, 340 in Sunday school, and total contributions of \$10,595.

We add this further statement relating to the early history of the Forks Church. Though across the Yadkin from Mr. Gano's church in the Jersey Settlement to the east of the Yadkin, doubtless some from the Forks section had been

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<sup>2</sup> "The Baptists in the Forks of the Yadkin," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, pp. 238-249, July 1898.



## THE BRANCHES

members of Gano's church before his abandonment of that church in 1759 during the Cherokee war of 1759-1761, and it was these, the remains of Mr. Gano's church in the Jersey Settlement, who constituted the greater part of the membership of the Forks branch of Shallow Fords on its first constitution. The Forks was much nearer to them than Timber Ridge. Probably, as Professor Alderman suggests, its operations were suspended during the troubles of the Revolution, but on the reorganization of the Timber Ridge Church its members again became active and represented the entire church, the parent church at Timber Ridge, and the branch church at the Forks, as delegates to the Yadkin Association. This continued until July 1793, when the Forks became an independent church, choosing as its first pastor Rev. Jesse Benjamin Buckner, who had been a minister among the Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek, and who afterwards was very active in his new charge.

Another of the three branches of the church which Morgan Edwards found when he visited this section in 1771 or 1772 was that at "*Mulberry-fields.*" Like the branches "near the Ford," and "in the Fork," this third branch already had a house of worship. Edwards' statement indicates further that this branch, as the others, had been active and adding to its membership for three years previous to his visit, that is, since 1769, Edwards' date of the organization. This makes it certain that this Mulberry Fields branch of the church of which Elder Joseph Murphy was pastor was a different church from the church of the same name mentioned in the record book of the Dutchman's Creek Church which itself was not organized until October 5, 1772, while the branch of the Dutchman's Creek Church at Mulberry Fields was not organized until January 22, 1774.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> An account of the Mulberry Fields branch of the Dutchman's Creek Church will be given in the chapter on Dutchman's Creek. Mulberry Fields is mentioned in our earliest historical records of this section, and often in

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

The meeting house stood on a lot in that part of the Mulberry Fields land belonging to the Moravians on which, in the year 1778, in the months from June to September, was built the first courthouse of Wilkes County, 200 yards distant.<sup>4</sup> On June 2, 1778, court was held "at Mulberry Fields Meeting House." For a detailed account see the footnote.<sup>5</sup> About this meeting-house Dr. G. W. Greene, a native of this section makes this further statement: "In the early part of the present (19th) century the Mulberry Fields church stood in Wilkesboro, about two hundred yards east of the present location of the Wilkesboro Baptist church. But many years ago the church died and the old house was removed."<sup>6</sup>

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the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*. It was an extensive area on both sides of the Yadkin River, seemingly getting its name from Mulberry Creek which flows into the Yadkin from the north near Wilkesboro, and embracing lands probably as far east as Jonesville and Elkin. In these Mulberry Fields the Moravian Brethren owned two tracts, 8,773 acres, the gift of Earl Granville, "on both sides of the Yadkin." On the "Map of the East Part of Surry County, Drawn May 10, 1771," p. 433, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, the "Road from Mulberry Fields" lies along the north side of the Yadkin River.

<sup>4</sup> With reference to the Moravian ownership of the land on which the Wilkes County courthouse was built, see the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, pp. 1208, 1215, 1220.

<sup>5</sup> D. L. Corbitt, *Formation of North Carolina Counties, 1663-1943*, p. 227 f. "Wilkes was formed in 1777 from Surry and the District of Washington. The Act was to become effective February 15, 1778. . . . The act establishing the county stipulated that the first court was to be held at the house of John Brown. Commissioners were named to select a place centrally located for the erection of a courthouse, prison and stocks. The second court was held June 1, 1778, in the 'bent of the Yadkin.' The next day it was held at Mullberry Fields Meeting House. On June 3, the commissioners who were to select a site for the county seat reported as follows: 'We, the commissioners appointed by act of Assembly to lay out and appoint the proper place in the county of Wilkes where to erect a courthouse, prison, pillory and stocks of the said county, have met and materially considered the same, do adjudge and appoint the place where the Mulberry Meeting House stands as the most central, suitable and proper place whereon to locate public buildings.' In September, 1778, court was held in the courthouse. . . . By 1801 Wilkesborough had been laid out at the courthouse. . . . In 1825 the Assembly authorized a new courthouse to be erected in the center of the public square in Wilkesborough. Wilkesborough is the county seat."

<sup>6</sup> Greene, "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 67f. Dr. Greene, however, was mistaken in the supposition that this church was that mentioned in the record book of Dutchman's Creek Church. Others have followed him in this error.

## THE BRANCHES

Of this church, at Mulberry Fields, one of the three branches of Mr. Murphy's church on the Yadkin, organized in 1769, we have an interesting and historically valuable contemporary account. It was written by William Lenoir, a Revolutionary hero and statesman, in whose honor Lenoir County and Lenoir, the county seat of Caldwell County, were named. In the early '70's, he, with his father, had moved from Halifax County and made his home in Surry (Wilkes) County near the site of the present town of Wilkesboro, and "found this church (Mulberry Fields) in existence when he settled there." In 1824, General Lenoir had furnished a sketch of the Mulberry Fields Meeting House, along with other sketches to Ramsay for publication in his *History of Tennessee*. He gives a clear and satisfying picture of those early settlers, their interest in religion and the church, their social life, their home life, their hospitality and kindness to strangers. The part of the sketch that relates in particular to the church at Mulberry Fields is given here.

Surry was frontier country in 1775, including Wilkes, Ashe and Burke and extending to the Mississippi River. It was thinly inhabited being an entire desert.

Then the Mulberry Fields Meeting House was the only place of worship in said county. It was built by the Baptists and very large congregations of different persuasions of people attended their meetings. The gentlemen generally dressed in hunting shirts, short breeches, leggins and moccasins. The ladies in linsy (flax) petticoats and bed gowns and often without shoes in summer. Some had bonnets and bed gowns of calico, but generally of linsy, and some of them had on men's hats. Their hair was commonly clubbed.

Men generally had long hair and wore it either in a cue or clubbed. Once at a large meeting I noticed that there were but two ladies that had on long gowns. One of them was laced genteelly and the body of the other was open and the tail thereof drawn up and tucked in her apron or coat string. They appeared very orderly and devout at meetings, and going to their homes you would find them living well and they would treat you with great hospitality, giving you plenty of pork, beef, bear meat and venison; also milk, butter, cheese and honey. The buffaloes and elk were then chiefly

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

destroyed. And when you left them, as there were no public roads and few plain paths, the men would go with you to show you the way until you could be accommodated by some other person. You might travel hundreds of miles and not meet with any person who would receive any pay.

It is clear from Morgan Edwards' account that Mulberry Fields was one of the three branches of the church organized not later than 1769 by Elder Joseph Murphy and that Murphy was in charge when Edwards was on his tour through that section three years later. Probably one reason for Murphy's moving to the Deep Creek section in 1773 was that he might be nearer this church. The records indicate after moving he was very active in this section.<sup>7</sup> In all probability he continued to be regarded as the minister of this church until the organization of his church at Deep Creek in 1777, and he was in charge during the years 1771-1775, when its Sunday services were attended by the congregation of which General Lenoir wrote.

According to Morgan Edwards, Elder Murphy had two assistants at this church, David Chapman and John Cates. Of Chapman I have found no other record, but in 1796 a John Cate (or Cates) was a delegate from the South Fork of Roaring River to the Yadkin Association. Asplund in the 1790 edition of his *Register* makes no mention of Mulberry Fields, but in the neighboring territory names two churches, Roaring River with 33 members, and South Fork of Roaring River, with 54 members. Both of these churches were closely connected with the Mulberry Church, and joined in the formation of the Yadkin Association in 1790. In 1794 the Mulberry Fields Church also became a member of that Association. Thereafter it was closely associated with the South Fork of Roaring River.

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<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 867.

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## VII

### DEEP CREEK

Deep Creek is the name of a considerable stream which flows into the Yadkin River west of Winston-Salem. The main stream is formed a few miles above the mouth by a north and a south branch, which with their many tributaries drain almost the entire present county of Yadkin, its headwaters being in the uplands to the west. In the records of the Moravians, and generally, the name Deep Creek often has reference not to a stream but to a district not quite co-extensive with the territory drained by the stream, but beginning ten or twelve miles to the west of the Yadkin. In that district in all directions from Yadkinville are today found churches of several denominations, including the Baptists, each with the name Deep Creek, possibly because of location on or near one of the branches of the stream.

It was natural that religious activity should very early extend from Moravia and the settlements west of the Yadkin to the contiguous settlements further west. Our first historical reference to religious interest in this section is an entry in the Bethabara Diary for August 2, 1765, which reads: "From Bethania Br. Etwein visited the people on Deep Creek, and held a meeting in the house of the elder Riesen."<sup>1</sup> Our next contemporary record of religious ac-

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<sup>1</sup> Probably this was "old father Ries" who afterwards, in 1771-72, welcomed Soelle eagerly on every visit, and rejoiced to have him hold service in his house.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

tivity in Deep Creek is for a period beginning six years later, in 1771, and is found in the *Diary* of Br. George Soelle, the Moravian missionary of whom we have already had some account. As we have seen, on April 9, 1771, on invitation he preached in Murphy's church west of the Yadkin. At that time Soelle was beginning the first of several missionary trips through the Deep Creek section, some longer, some shorter, which he continued until the eve of his death, May 4, 1773. Of these trips Soelle left an account in his *Diary*, which is our chief source of information about the Deep Creek section in the years 1771 and 1772. Already at that time the Deep Creek and adjacent sections were beginning to teem with settlers. English-speaking settlers were more numerous than all others. There were also many Germans of whom Soelle most often mentions those living in neighborhoods along Deep Creek—the Hermann family furthest east, the Ries Home five miles west, and the Miller Settlement some miles further up Deep Creek. Further south the German settlers were so numerous that they had given their name to Dutchman's Creek which flows into the South Yadkin. In the Allen Settlement Soelle found a neighborhood where the settlers were "all Irish," with regular Irish characteristics—poor, hospitable, religiously interested.<sup>2</sup> In 1771 among the Germans of Deep Creek there was little interest in religion. "The people about here are wild," said Soelle; the Rieses, the Langs,

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<sup>2</sup> Soelle's account, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 791, (abridged) is as follows: "The settlers here are all Irish, a robbed and plundered people, where poverty makes itself at home. . . . My host received me gladly, and cared for me as well as he could. Milk and cornbread was the fare practically all the time I was there, and not enough of that." A day was spent in circulating the notice of Soelle's presence, and that service would be held, and on the following day a large number gathered, so that the service had to be held out of doors. When preaching was over urgent request was made to Soelle to come and live among them, "for they are a forsaken people, to whom no one ever went, and it was more than sixty miles to the Yadkin. . . . It is distressing to see men in such terrible darkness; may the dear heavenly Father lighten the heavy judgment somewhat, so that their eyes may be opened to see the glory of God!"

the Millers, "are the only Germans hereabouts who care for religion." At that time the Germans on Deep Creek had no churches, but places for preaching were usually provided for the missionary at the homes in which he visited; if the house proved too small for the congregation the service would be out of doors. The Rieses home, however, in which Soelle was always welcome, was large enough for the congregations that often gathered there to hear Soelle. In 1772, the Germans living in the vicinity built a meeting house, the first in this section, in which Soelle, being one of the Moravian Brethren, was not allowed to preach on the representation that the house was built for the use of only Lutheran and Reformed Church ministers. But further south, on Dutchman's Creek and no great distance from the South Yadkin, the Germans had already built a meeting house, called Dutchman's Creek, not the Baptist church of that name, in the neighborhood of which, in July 1771, lived "Pastor Wartman, born in Hanover, educated and ordained," who unsuccessfully tried to prevent Soelle from preaching in the church, because he did not recite the Lord's Prayer both before and after the sermon. Thereafter when in this neighborhood Soelle preached in a meeting house built by a Quaker named Daniel Lewis.

In 1771-1772, Deep Creek was a new field. Twenty years before no settler owned a plantation in it. But it was now filling with settlers. In general these settlers were destitute, and in particular destitute of religious advantages. They brought no ministers of the Gospel with them. It was a missionary field, and in recognition of this from the Moravian Brethren, just across the Yadkin, their missionary, Br. George Soelle, went to labor among them. Though he could preach in both English and German with equal facility, in Deep Creek he did the greater part of his work among the German settlers. Probably he had expected to be left to labor alone there, but on his arrival, or soon thereafter,

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Baptist preachers were working in this field, and were heard gladly by the German as well as by English settlers, the explanation being: "All the Germans here understand English also." And it is stated further: "The Baptists were very active in seeking members in this neighborhood." One of the Baptist preachers was Rev. William Cook. Of him the following account is given in Soelle's *Diary* for June 20, 21, 1772: "June 20. Across the Yadkin to Valentine Riess. June 21. Services in the meeting house. Many English there. Mr. Cook preached to them after my service. He is a very earnest and well intentioned man, but the atonement is still a mystery to him." A further statement is: "Many English had gathered as Mr. Cook was to preach to them." This indicates that already in June, 1772, Cook had been preaching a considerable time and had established a reputation as a preacher. It was several months later, October 5, 1772, that Dutchman's Creek Church was constituted with William Cook as pastor.

Rev. William Cook had come to this section shortly before from the Kehukee section of the State, and our accounts make it certain that at this time many Baptists were coming from that and other sections of North Carolina and Virginia to Deep Creek. Though these Baptist settlers were very active in seeking new members, with the exception of Cook they seem to have had no minister of the Gospel resident among them. They were like sheep without a shepherd. The fields were white for the harvest, but there was no reaper. This was the situation that Soelle found in 1771-1772, but he found on his visits that another with like interest as his own had already been visiting this section on Deep Creek and as far west as Hunting Creek. This was none other than Elder Joseph Murphy, who, in September 1771, when the dangers of capture by Tryon's horsemen had passed, had left Boone's Cave on the Yadkin,



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where according to tradition he had found a safe refuge, and had joined the Moravian missionary, Br. Soelle, in two preaching services at Glenns Meeting House on Deep Creek. After this, Soelle has references to Murphy's interest in the work on Deep Creek and further west on Hunting Creek, and on March 5, 1773, two months before his death, Soelle noted that Murphy was planning "to move elsewhere." Soon thereafter Murphy left his former home "west of the Yadkin" on the lower Deep Creek, for a new home further west on the same stream. Just where this new home was is not definitely told, but probably both it and the first Baptist Deep Creek Church were at no great distance from the location of the present Deep Creek Church of the Yadkin Association.

The records indicate that on changing his residence Murphy did not altogether abandon the field nearer the Yadkin where he had been laboring for five years; he kept in communication with the church at Timber Ridge and sometimes preached in it, but for the remainder of his life his main interest was Deep Creek. In 1773 his services were more needed on Deep Creek than along the Yadkin. As said above, in October, 1772, Rev. William Cook had gone to Dutchman's Creek, helped organize a Baptist church there and had become its first pastor. Seemingly Cook had already fixed his residence to the south near Cana in the present county of Davie, where his cottage still stands. But on Deep Creek, on the departure of Cook there was no Baptist minister. In the previous June the new settlers assembled in throngs to hear Cook preach and the Baptists were zealous and active beyond all others in their proselyting zeal. It was the duty and obligation of the Baptists to provide for the continuation of the work already begun. For this there was need of a minister who lived among them, one who shared their zeal, and was able to stimulate and

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direct them in their work, and who, above all, was an able and powerful preacher of the Gospel of Salvation. For a correct understanding of the religious history of western North Carolina we must keep in mind that among the settlers a chief desire was that the gospel be regularly and faithfully preached.

In the general religious destitution and lack of gospel preachers near the Yadkin, seemingly Murphy believed that his services were more needed on Deep Creek than elsewhere. The need was the greater after the death of Soelle on May 4, 1773, owing to the fact that Br. Utley, his successor, visited the Deep Creek section much less often than Soelle had done, and because of illness ended his labors some months before his death on October 9, 1775. Until after the Revolutionary War Murphy seems to have been the only resident English-speaking minister living in the Deep Creek section, and except for a missionary of the Moravian Brethren who rarely visited them, the English settlers on Deep Creek were supplied with preaching only by Murphy. When Br. Fritz was on Deep Creek in January 1776, he found his congregation large, for owing to the absence of Murphy they had had no preaching for a long time.<sup>3</sup> Murphy soon returned and resumed his work on Deep Creek. Early in the next year, 1777, doubtless under his leadership, the Baptists on Deep Creek, according to one statement of Asplund, organized the Deep Creek Baptist Church, of which at its constitution Murphy became pastor, and as such served it until his death in 1816. His assumption of the pastorate doubtless entailed the surrender

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<sup>3</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, p. 1045. As told above, Br. Fritz supposed that the Bryants and Murphy had been hiding. In August 1775, one of the Bryants had trouble with the Committee of Safety in Salisbury; soon thereafter he went to Kentucky, where he acquired large possessions of land, on which later many from the Yadkin section settled. Possibly Murphy went with Bryant on this trip. Probably Bryant at this time had no reason to be in hiding, and certainly Murphy did not; he was a close friend of the powerful Bryant family, never a Tory. Throughout the remainder of his long life he enjoyed the confidence of all Americans.

to others of his care of his former churches nearer the Yadkin.

Except in the records of the Moravians, record of religious activity in the Deep Creek section is scant for the years of the Revolutionary War and the years following.

The Moravian Brethren continued the work on Deep Creek begun by Br. Soelle in 1771, but after more than thirty years had not enlarged upon it. A characteristic statement indicating the activities of the year is the following from the *Salem Diary* for June 30, 1792: "Our friends on Deep Creek have been visited, as is customary, once or twice a year." The only meeting house in which the visiting Moravian ministers preached was that on Deep Creek, thirty miles from Salem, finished in 1772. Nearly always Soelle's successors preached in the houses of the friendly families found there by Soelle; usually they were heard by large and attentive congregations, of whom some were Baptists, including preachers and exhorters. On these visits the Moravian minister often baptized children brought by parents to the preacher at the homes where he was entertained.

In 1790, the Deep Creek Church, according to Asplund, was in the Sandy Creek Association, and had as its ministers Joseph Murphy and John Tolliver, itinerant, and a membership of 25. It continued in the Sandy Creek Association until 1805, long after the other churches in its neighborhood had joined the Yadkin Association. This was probably owing to the influence of Murphy, of whose work in the former association an account has been given in the first volume of this work. It joined the Yadkin in 1805 at its meeting with the Flat Rock Church, its delegates being Joseph Murphy and Isaac Coe. From the organization of the Yadkin Association, Murphy had attended its meetings and taken an important part in its proceedings, and was often one of the preachers in the services. At several meetings after 1805 he preached the introductory

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sermon.<sup>4</sup> Of his work and standing in the Association, Benedict says,<sup>5</sup> "Joseph Murphy has been, in most respects, the most distinguished minister among the churches of this body," and relates several anecdotes illustrative of his wit and readiness of repartee. Semple, writing in 1810,<sup>6</sup> says that Murphy was then "respected as a venerable old man," and that he was then about seventy-six years old. According to the records of the Eaton's Baptist Church, in November, 1815, Murphy preached there a sermon on church business.

There are several references to the Deep Creek Church in the record books of Eaton's Church and Flat Rock Church for the years 1790 to 1820. Most of them relate to calls for helps made to the Deep Creek Church or by the Deep Creek Church, either for settling difficulties in the churches or for ordaining deacons and ministers. When a minister was to be ordained a presbytery of ordained ministers was required. Deep Creek Church called on the Flat Rock Church for ministerial helps for the second Saturday in August, 1816, and again in January, 1817, which indicates that Deep Creek was seeking new ministers and that Murphy was no longer serving them, probably because he was no longer living.

Miss Fries' *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* for the years 1784 to 1792 reveal something of the religious conditions in the Deep Creek section for these years and in particular of the work of the Baptists there. The Moravian missionaries now preached in this section less often, only once or twice a year, but several rival sects were active there—Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Universal Redemp-

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<sup>4</sup> Manuscript Minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1791, 1793, 1796, 1805, 1807, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814. In December, 1791, Deep Creek Church was represented in a joint meeting of the Yadkin and Sandy Creek Associations, its delegate being Joseph Murphy.

<sup>5</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 112f.

<sup>6</sup> *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 392.



tioners, and Lutherans, the last being served by a former Hessian soldier named Pruegel. On his visit to this section late in June, 1792, Br. Kramsch was informed by about the only remaining faithful Moravian left there that all these, the Baptists most of all, were hostile to the Brethen and all sects set their meetings on the day that Kramsch was to preach on purpose to keep the people from hearing him, who, however, preached to an overflowing meeting house.<sup>7</sup>

The Deep Creek Church had some serious troubles with her sister churches in this period. In 1819, because of disorders in the Deep Creek Church, it was refused a seat in the Yadkin Association. The complaint was made by the Bear Creek Church, and the disorders seem to have been of a doctrinal order, but just their character does not appear from the minutes. A committee consisting of seven of the ablest ministers and laymen of the Association was appointed, on the request of the Deep Creek Church, to investigate and report at the next meeting of the Association, at which time the reported disorders were removed, and the church was restored to its seat in the Association. After this delegates of this church were regularly named in the minutes of the Association until 1831 or 1832, but in 1833 the minutes note that the Deep Creek Church "has schismatically rent herself from the Association," and that the church was formally excluded from that body. The conduct of the Deep Creek Church is to be explained by the fact that the Association at its meeting in 1831 had voted strong approval of the Baptist State Convention, and the Deep Creek Church had joined six other churches in the formation of the Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association in November, 1832,<sup>8</sup> of which account will be given below.

<sup>7</sup> Fries, *Records of the Morvians in North Carolina*, V, pp. 2180, 2271, 2286, 2327, 2362.

<sup>8</sup> When the Deep Creek Church left the Yadkin Association and in 1832 joined in the formation of the Fisher's River Baptist Association (Primi-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Thus this church, founded by one who looked on Shubal Stearns as his spiritual father, was lost for half a century, if not to the Missionary Baptists, at least to the Yadkin Association. Differing from nearly all the other churches of the Association, it made no report of the number of its members, which first began to appear in the minutes of 1818. The present Deep Creek Church (Missionary) was constituted in 1884. At the Yadkin Association of 1885, delegates appeared from the Deep Creek Church, Rev. J. J. Angel, pastor, and it was admitted to the Association. At that time it had a membership of 127, and a Sunday school with 108 enrolled. But no delegates appeared from this church after 1896, until 1912, at which time it again requested admission to the Association and was welcomed; its pastor was Rev. S. S. May.

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tive) probably only those of its members of Primitive Baptist faith went with the seceding church. These numbered twenty-five. In 1853 there had been no increase. In 1904 the number had increased to forty. The location in 1869, according to Ashburn, *Fisher's River Baptist Association*, p. 56 f., was two miles north of East Bend in Yadkin County. It seems to have had only a small meeting-house. The Yadkin Association never met with it, and when the Fisher's River Association met with it in April, 1851, the meetings were held, not in the meeting house, but in Hutchins' School House on Coe's Creek.

At present there are two churches named Deep Creek in Yadkin County, according to the map of it in Ormond's *The Country Church in North Carolina*, facing p. 322. The Deep Creek Baptist Church, as indicated on the map, is in the southeastern part of the county, about eight miles from Yadkinville. The East Bend Baptist Church is in the northeast, near the location of the Primitive Baptist Deep Creek Church indicated in Ashburn's history.

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## VIII

### DUTCHMAN'S CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

After the organization of the three branches of what Morgan Edwards called the Shallow Fords Church, the next Baptist church to be organized in the region west of the Yadkin River, that part afterwards often called the Forks of the Yadkin, was Dutchman's Creek, named from a branch of the South Yadkin near which the church was built. It was on or near the site at present occupied by the Eaton's Baptist Church, which succeeded Dutchman's Creek.

The records of this church, which are practically complete,<sup>1</sup> show that it was organized on October 5, 1772, with ten members: William Cook, James Thompkins, Ebenezer Fairchilds, Abraham Adams, Triphena Adams, Thomas Eastep, Susanna Eastep, David Revis, Jemima Revis, Jesse Revis, seven males and three females. Of these the one person of whom we have previous mention was the minister, William Cook, who Morgan Edwards says was assistant minister of Fishing Creek Church, the present Reedy Creek of Warren County. As has already been told in our chapter on Deep Creek, on coming to this section Cook preached in the Deep Creek neighborhood and had already gained a considerable following when about June 20, 1772, some months before the organization of the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church, he preached to a large and attentive congregation at the place in or near the home of the Rieses on

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<sup>1</sup> The original record book of the Church and several copies are in the Library of Wake Forest College.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Deep Creek, where Br. Soelle usually preached. From what places the other constituent members had come is unknown; probably they were settlers who had belonged to Regular Baptist churches to the east, such as the Jersey Settlement on the Yadkin, who for one reason or another had not joined any of the branches of Murphy's Separate Baptist Church. Although they were in a section where German settlers were numerous, their names indicate that the first members were all of English descent, and the same is true of nearly all the more than 200 who became members in the period of its existence under the name Dutchman's Creek, 1772 to 1787.<sup>2</sup>

Its first and only minister was William Cook.<sup>3</sup> Just what led him from Fishing Creek to this section is unknown, nor do the records show what minister assisted him in the constitution of the church, which in the church's records is not called Dutchman's Creek but "The Regular Baptist Church in North Carolina, Rowan County, in the Forks of the Yadkin."

The church was soon active in all the functions of such an organization. At their second meeting the members elected a deacon, James Thompkins, and a clerk, Ebenezer Fairchilds, and provided for regular monthly business meetings and quarterly celebration of the Lord's Supper, to which in June, 1773, they voted to welcome Separate Baptist brethren. Soon after they provided for a table for the service, and for getting a deed for the church lot. They

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. J. T. Alderman, *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, 242 ff., says that many of the names of the members of this church are to be found on the roll of the Fishing Creek Church in Warren County, but the records that I have seen do not support this statement. Professor Alderman also says, "The Dutch Baptists, who came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, united with this church." He does not give his authority for his statement, and the names on the church roll do not support it. The Germans had a church of the same name in this neighborhood.

<sup>3</sup> See Morgan Edwards, *Materials*, under name of Fishing Creek. *North Carolina Historical Review*, VII, p. 375.



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also provided for the democratic conduct of their meetings, taking care that they should be orderly. At an early meeting they adopted a church covenant, the usual covenant of the Particular Baptist churches of the day, corrected to suit their own convenience. Unlike the church at Fishing Creek (Reedy Creek) from which their pastor came, in the early years they had no ruling elders, but the minutes of July, 1782, show that the church then had such an officer. They also early committed themselves to pay the expenses of the church, which consisted of provision for the bread and wine for the Lord's Supper, a bounty for the minister, and the keeping of the house of worship in repair.

Its pastor, Rev. William Cook, before its organization, and both he and the church in its early years, manifested great evangelistic and proselyting zeal. Miss Fries records a statement of Rev. George Soelle that large congregations gathered to hear Cook preach, and that Baptists showed great activity far and near in seeking new members. If any one of any persuasion showed that he was truly religious the Baptists tried to win him.<sup>4</sup> The list of names of members, however, as said above, shows that with rare exceptions they were English and not German. As the name indicates, the church was in a German neighborhood and we know that many of the inhabitants around the church were Germans who had not, however, secured their lands in one large tract, since doubtless many entries of land had already been made by others when they came, and many of their farms were contiguous to the lands of the English settlers. As the Moravian records reveal, the Germans had a meeting house in this section which they called the "Heidel-

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<sup>4</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 790: "George Lang was a staunch friend of Soelle, who thought highly of him,—'they and the Rieses are the only Germans hereabouts who care for religion.' So it was no wonder that the Baptists tried hard to get him to join them, and that he had much to endure from the taunts of his friends."

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burg Evangelical Lutheran Church," but better known as the "Dutch Meeting House," a log house, built early in the 1760's.<sup>5</sup> The Moravian missionaries who regularly visited them preached to them in their own language, even though many of them could understand English. For this reason the Baptists were not able to proselyte many of them.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church gained very few from the Germans of this section, the evangelizing zeal of their pastor brought a remarkable increase in membership from the first. In the month after its constitution the church admitted three persons by letter, and before the end of the first year two others by letter and six by baptism, more than doubling its original membership.

The second year was one of remarkable expansion. At the home church twenty-two were admitted by baptism and 3 by letter from October, 1773, to October 1774, and 6 more by baptism on November 5, 1774. But Cook and his church were not content to confine their labors to the immediate vicinity, and soon extended their missionary activities to two other fields.

The first of these was Mulberry Fields, to the north, toward the site of the present town of Wilkesboro, about twenty miles to the northwest of Dutchman's Creek. This was a section sometimes visited by the Moravian missionaries,<sup>7</sup> but they accomplished little. Morgan Edwards, as told above, before 1772 found one of the three branches of what he called the Shallow Fords Separate Baptist Church, having its own house of worship in Mulberry

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<sup>5</sup> Mary J. Heitman, in a newspaper article found in Miss Flossie Martin's scrap book, "Churches and Schools of Davie County"; the old church book, with a few leaves gone from the front, records the baptism of Christina Buhe, born Oct. 2, 1766.

<sup>6</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, Soelle's Diary, pp. 784-803, etc.

<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, pp. 621, 665.

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Fields, which was where the town of Wilkesboro is situated now. Cook, however, did not get his members from the Separate group, but by baptisms following meetings: eleven on November 28, 1773; eight more on January 22, 1774, and six more on the 28th of the following August; and two others by letter the same year, making a total of twenty-seven. On January 22, 1774, the members in this section were formally recognized as a branch of the mother church at Dutchman's Creek. Among those baptized was John Prophet (Proffit), who in the years 1796-1811 was pastor of Cub Creek Baptist Church in Wilkes County.<sup>8</sup>

The second community in which Cook, and John Gano, as will be told later, gathered a large group of new members was called Boone's Ford, about ten miles eastward from the home church. It is near the site of the old Boone home in the present county of Davidson, where lived the Boone family, most of whom, but not Daniel Boone, are shown by the records to have been members of this church.<sup>9</sup> As in the case of Mulberry Fields, the membership of the group at Boone's Ford did not come from the Separate Baptist group, but came into the church by baptism after evangelizing meetings. On September 19, 1773, four were baptized here; on March 20, 1774, fifteen others were received at Boone's Ford and baptized by Rev. John Gano, the famous Particular Baptist minister. On April 19, 1774, twelve more members were received and baptized into the membership of the church; and on September 17 following six other members by letter and one by baptism. This made a total of thirty-eight at this place. Thus at the end of the year 1774, the church which was constituted in October,

<sup>8</sup> Ms. Minutes of the Yadkin Association.

<sup>9</sup> Leonard, *History of Davidson County*, p. 190. Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 787:—"the one later called Idol's ferry, for local tradition states that it was by the ford at this point that Daniel Boone crossed and recrossed the Yadkin. Idol's ford and ferry have been destroyed by the back water from the dam of the Southern Power Company's plant." Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 122f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

1772, with 10 members, had increased to 107, of whom 42 were in the mother church at Dutchman's Creek, 27 at Mulberry Fields, and 38 at Boone's Ford.

After January 1, 1775, there are no formal statements of accessions to the Dutchman's Creek Church by baptism and letter, but that such accessions continued to be made is evident from new names found on the church roll and incidentally in the records, making a total of more than 200 names of the members of these years, 1772-1787. The records indicate that this church was much disturbed by the turmoil of the Revolution from which probably no section of North Carolina suffered more than that known as the Forks of the Yadkin, in which loyalists and patriots were about equal in number and influence, and in many neighborhoods a man's foes lived on lands that adjoined his own. The churches, and in particular the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church, suffered from the general disturbances, beginning with the year 1775; hence it is necessary to give some account of the political movements of the time so far as they affected the operation of the churches. Several writers on North Carolina history have published inaccurate and misleading statements with reference to Rev. William Cook, the minister of Dutchman's Creek Church, which need correction.<sup>10</sup> For that reason, a rather comprehensive statement, such as that given below, is required in a history of North Carolina Baptists.

Probably more than half of the entire population of this section had been Regulators or sympathetic to the Regulator movement, and ready at times to use violence to secure

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<sup>10</sup> My statements in regard to Cook in the first volume of this work, p. 469 f., are not quite just to him; they were adopted from the views of others unsympathetic to Baptists; a complete examination of the existing original records has led me to the high estimate set on his services in the text following. For one thing, following the statement found in *Wheeler's History*, p. 366, I stated that Cook was summoned before the Committee of Safety at Salisbury; the records do not support this statement; he went of his own accord, seemingly at the instance of members of his church.



redress for wrongs.<sup>11</sup> In his campaign to crush the Regulators after the battle of Alamance, Tryon and his army encamped in the neighboring Wachovia, June 4-10, 1771. Great numbers came in and took the oath, while, according to the report of Brother Marshall, the Moravian minister, "Those who refused the terms had their houses burned and their fields ruined."<sup>12</sup> Following these barbarous cruelties many of the Regulators, as already told left their homes for new homes beyond the mountains, preferring the risk of clashes with the savage Indians to the arrogance and extortions of Tryon's friends (Hufham's "Court Party"), who never remitted their animosity against the Regulators, but twice refused to pass a general act of pardon for them, called "the act of oblivion," as recommended by Governor Josiah Martin, the last time late in December, 1773, and at that time grossly insulting Governor Martin by appealing to the departed Governor Tryon to come to their help. They had no sympathy for the kindness shown by Martin to the Regulators after he had investigated and found that their complaints were justified. On the other hand, Governor Martin had become convinced that the Regulators had been wronged and had shown a kindly spirit towards them. It was only natural then that the former Regulators should have taken the side of Martin, so long as the issue was thought to be between Governor Martin and the partisans and agents of Tryon, the chief of whom was Samuel Johnston, the author of the *Bloody Johnston Act*, relying on which Tryon began the Regulator war. This will explain also why William Cook, the minister of the Dutchman's Creek Church, and some of its members perhaps, were ready to manifest publicly their friendship for the Governor; this, too, will bring some understanding of the process by which

<sup>11</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, *passim*, in which there are 31 references to the Regulators, many of them detailed.

<sup>12</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, pp. 619f.

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some of these were led to become Tories. The men who followed Tryon and later blocked all efforts to pass "the act of oblivion" are not free of the guilt of this unhappy result.<sup>13</sup>

In general, however, the members of the Dutchman's Creek Church were able to see that something more was involved in the revolutionary movement, which assumed serious proportions early in 1775, than their friendship for Governor Josiah Martin; the opportunity was now at hand to rid themselves once and for all of foreign domination which might at any moment send them another Tryon; the prevailing sentiment among them was for freedom and self-government. At least two members of Dutchman's Creek Church were on the Committee of Safety of Rowan County, records of the proceedings of which are found in Wheeler's *History of North Carolina*, under the head of "Rowan County." One of these was James Wilson, who had been in the group of Regulators who on March 7, 1771, at Salisbury "armed with the authority of the people, met the clerk, sheriffs, and other officers of the crown, and compelled them to disgorge their ill-gotten extortions." The other who served on this Committee was Jonathan Hunt, who lived near Wilson, and like him was much interested in the religious development of the section towards the Yadkin from

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<sup>13</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, III, p. 1047. Salem Diary for 1776: p. 1047, f. Feb. 3. "After the evening service ten men arrived from up on the Atkin, fleeing from the hard treatment which is being given to Non-Associators there." Feb. 5. "Last night another party from the Atkin passed on their way to Cross Creek, and during the day various men passed in the same direction." Graff to U. E. C., February 14: "On account of the unfounded report that Gov. Josiah Martin had landed with troops below Cross Creek, and expected the loyal to join him there, many men from this and other counties were persuaded to leave their farms and go to him. The hard treatment they were receiving from the other party almost forced them to do this. Their number was perhaps 600. But they had no intelligent leadership, and no supply of food and ammunition, expecting to find all that when they reached the Governor, so when they found themselves entirely disappointed, they returned in small companies to their farms. But now they were the more sharply treated by their opponents, who took away their arms, and forced them either to take an oath to remain quiet, or to go into the field against the Governor."

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Dutchman's Creek.<sup>14</sup> But Col. Hunt, who won his rank and title in the Indian wars, and James Wilson lived in a section where friendship for Martin was strong and the people refused to attend a meeting appointed by the Rowan County Committee of Safety for Col. Hunt's residence late in October, 1775.<sup>15</sup> Strange as it may seem, almost all the members of the Dutchman's Creek Church, unlike their neighbors, but like almost all the other Baptists of North Carolina and Virginia, were on the side of liberty. But in the summer of 1774, before the issues were clearly defined, the minister, William Cook, and five of the members whose names are given in the minutes, put their names to a paper called "The Protest" which had been diligently circulated among them, and was signed by Samuel Bryant and 194 other inhabitants of the counties of Rowan and Surry.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, pp. 686, 789, 794, 803, 804.

<sup>15</sup> Wheeler, *History of North Carolina*, I, 371 f.; *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, X, 310.

<sup>16</sup> A longer protest was signed in Anson County, a shorter one in Guilford, but much of the phraseology was the same in all. That from Rowan and Surry reads: "Address of Sundry Inhabitants of the Counties of Rowan and Surry to Governor Martin. Permit us on behalf of ourselves and many others of his Majesty's most dutiful subjects within the counties of Rowan and Surry to protest against any person or persons who may violate any of his Majesty's Laws or the peace of this Government. We are truly invigorated with the warmest zeal and Attachment to the British Constitution and Laws upon which our Lives and fortunes and the welfare of the Province now depend and we utterly protest against meetings of the people against the peace thereof or anything which may give birth to sedition and insurrection. We cannot but express to your Excellency that we consider all such Associations at this crisis of very dangerous fatality to your Excellency's Good Government of this Province; distress the internal welfare of this County and mislead the unwary from the paths of duty and we do assure your Excellency that we are determined with the assistance of God in our respective stations steadfastly to continue his Majesty's loyal subjects and to contribute all in our power for the preservation of the public peace and that we shall endeavor to cultivate such sentiments in all those under our care and warm their breasts with true zeal for his Majesty and affection for his Illustrious Family, May the Almighty God direct his Council, his Parliament, and all those under him that their endeavors may be for the advancement of piety and the safety, honor and welfare of our Sovereign and his Kingdom, that the malice of his enemies may be assuaged, their wild designs confounded and defeated, so that the whole world may see his person and Country are the special objects of Divine dispensation and

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Evidence is abundant that the signing of "The Protest" by their minister, Rev. William Cook, and a few other members of the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church, was regarded with much dissatisfaction by the other members of the church, including Brethren James Wilson and Jonathan Hunt, who were also members of the Committee of Safety of Rowan County, and it was probably on their suggestion and with the hope of reestablishing friendly relations with them that on July 18, 1775, Cook went before that Committee. There is no record that Cook had been summoned by the Committee as a whole. On coming before it, Minister Cook showed much humility in manner of words, if we may accept as accurate the statement found in the records of the Committee meeting. He spoke "in the most explicit and humiliating terms professing his sorrow for signing the Protest against the cause of liberty, which lately circulated in the Forks of the Yadkin; and other parts of his conduct in opposing the just rights and liberties of the nation in general and American liberty in particular; and entreating for information relative to the present unhappy disturbance." Seemingly this statement, recorded with such fullness, was highly pleasing to the Committee and convinced them of Cook's essential honesty and loyalty to the cause of liberty. Thereafter there is no record of further charges against him, and he seems to have enjoyed the esteem and favor of all the members of his church; he continued as their minister and in all matters showed himself a true patriot.<sup>17</sup>

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Providence. (Signed by Samuel Bryant and 194 others.)" *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, IX, 1160.

<sup>17</sup> The only person shown by the records to have come before the Committee earlier than Cook to answer charges on account of "The Protest," was William Spurgin who met the Committee in November, 1774, and denied having signed. However, shortly after Cook's appearance before the Committee, as reported in Miss Fries' *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 880, on August 8, 1775, Samuel and Joseph Bryant came to Salem "and reported that the Committee in Salisbury had demanded a Declaration from them whether they were for the Country and Congress, or



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The next recorded meeting of the church was on September 30, 1775, at which an accusation was brought against Cook, but the brethren did not see fit to censure him, and voted that he should continue to preach. At their next monthly meeting, November 3, 1775, "it was agreed upon concerning the American cause if any of the brethren see cause to join in it they have the liberty to do it without being called to account by the church for it. But whether they join or not they should be used with brotherly love and freedom for the future." It will be observed that no provision was made for joining the opponents of the American cause. While Cook after this was repeatedly in trouble with his church, of which some account will be given later, there is no indication that it was because of any disloyalty to the cause of liberty. In fact, on February 14, 1778, Cook acted for the church in dealing with five of its members, who had been "speedily excommunicated for renting themselves from the church and also for signing the protest."

The patriotism of the strong majority of the members of the church is indicated by the fact that on March 15, 1777, twenty of them in church meeting signed their names pledging loyalty to the State Constitution and Laws. After this until March, 1780, the minutes of the church are almost entirely devoted to records of disciplining members; only rarely were the accusations given in the case of men, other than "renting" themselves from the church and its meetings. Many were the suspensions and excommunications, affecting some who had been the most useful members. In this period the meetings were often held, not in the church at Dutch-

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not." On January 11, following, *op. cit.*, III, p. 1045, the Bryants and Rev. Joseph Murphy, were said to have been in hiding a long time. As it turned out the Bryants had gone to Kentucky, where they established a settlement which in 1779 was attracting North Carolinians by the hundreds. Fries, *op. cit.*, III, pp. 1045, 1225, 1257, 1316. Samuel Bryant and Murphy soon returned to North Carolina, the latter to resume his preaching, and Bryant, in July 1780, to become the leader of a large band of Tories. *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, XIV, p. 541 ff., p. 867 f.

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man's Creek, where the large German population and many of the English-speaking under the influence of Samuel Bryant were Tories, but ten or fifteen miles away at the Baptist Deep Creek Meeting House. So serious were these disturbances that after March, 1780, until July 23, 1782, the church had no further recorded meeting. Then "the Brethren belonging to the constitution of William Cook's church," met at Rease's Meeting House, which was near or in the home of Valentine Ries on Deep Creek, a friend of Soelle, the Moravian missionary, who is not improbably the same as the Valentine Riece who began to be mentioned as a prominent member of the Yadkin Association soon after its organization.

In the period from midsummer, 1775, till the end of the war the church had been in turmoil. The pastor, William Cook, had failed to meet the approval of all the members of the church in his walk and conversation, and had been called before the church repeatedly. On May 31, 1777, a day for the hearing was appointed. So important was the matter that other churches were asked to send helps. The hearings continued through four or five meetings; on October 4, 1777, Cook "gave satisfaction for the first three accusations; on October 15, nothing was found worthy of suspense in the 'divers transgressions' of which he was accused" and he was authorized to continue to preach. He had not for some time performed the pastoral functions, but on May 8, 1778, "being called, gave himself up to take the pastoral care of the church." At the same time it was agreed that Cook might divide his time equally between Dutchman's Creek and Boone's Ford.

During the period when the hearings on the charges against Cook were in progress, both branches of the church, that at Mulberry Fields and that at Boone's Ford, sought and obtained right for separate constitution, but shortly after Cook had been restored, both these churches gave up

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their independence and returned to their former relationship with the home church, which seems to indicate that these branches did not approve the accusations against the pastor. But he did not long maintain his standing. When the church resumed operations on July 23, 1782, after a hiatus of recorded minutes of more than two years, Cook was no longer the minister, and was not regarded as a fit person to perform the pastoral functions of baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper, and the church was looking elsewhere for ministers to serve in this way. He was, however, still a member and on May 15, 1784, he was called upon to explain why he failed to attend the conferences, which he did to the satisfaction of the church at the next monthly meeting.

The minutes of the church do not make it clear what was the nature of the charges against Cook, but there is a clue in the charges brought against him by two other churches with which he was later connected, Flat Rock (Hunting Creek, Petty's Church) and Bear Creek. The minutes of both these churches reveal that Cook was much given to strong drink, and sometimes drank to excess.

Perhaps this is as good a place as any other to give some account of the drink evil which the churches in the Forks of the Yadkin had to combat for many years, both before and after the Revolutionary War. The minutes of the churches of this section reveal that drinking was common and "drinking to excess" very frequent among the male members, and was not unknown among the females. Sometimes the men shamed the churches by drinking at elections and other public gatherings. But "drinking to excess" was not tolerated by the churches, nor was it practiced by the greater number of their members. Being committed to it by the terms of the covenants of the churches, the members reported to the churches their fellow members who they had reason to believe had drunk too freely of spirituous

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liquors. Those so charged were brought before the monthly meetings. Usually they showed deep penitence and were excused, but the few unrepentant were promptly excluded. Moreover, the minutes do not leave any doubt that the churches of the Forks of the Yadkin section at that time, as all other times, stood for sobriety and temperance in the use of intoxicating liquors. The habits of nearly all the more than 100 ministers of the Yadkin Association in the use of strong drink were temperate and such as became persons of that sacred calling. It was only in the rarest instances that a minister showed a weakness in that respect that gave offense to his brethren and discredited the cause of Jesus Christ. In later chapters in this volume much fuller account will be given of the efforts of the Baptists to check the evils of intemperance.<sup>18</sup>

It should be observed also that the attitude of the people and the churches generally towards the use of strong drink was much different in North Carolina in the earlier period than it has been for the past century. The Moravian settlement in Wachovia was hardly three years old when on October 19, 1756, "Brn. Jacob Loesch and Erich Ingebretsen went to the Court at Salisbury, and secured a license for a Tavern" at Bethabara. During the month in the same town "a log house was raised for a bakery and distillery." When Salem was built a few years later it too had its Tavern, and in April, 1772, the Brethren at Salem began to think of the brewery, which was later built, the argument for it being that "less strong drink should be distilled; for beer would be much more wholesome for our Brethren, and the neighbors would buy it in quantity." So far as the printed records reveal the Moravians themselves were a very temperate people and moderate in their drinking,

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<sup>18</sup> Manuscript Minutes of Flat Rock Baptist Church, 1783, and years following; the Bear Creek Baptist Church, 1792 and years following; Eaton's Baptist Church, 1790, and years following; Cove Creek Baptist Church, 1799, and years following.



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but many of those who stopped at the Tavern often violently insisted on having more strong drink than the keepers were willing to sell them. The Tavern was very popular with high officials and leading men. The Moravians, however, wanted all they paid for, and on September 13, 1772, instructed Br. Meyer, keeper of the Tavern in Salem, to sell cider by beer measure, not wine.<sup>19</sup>

We now return to Mr. Cook. As was said above he was much given to strong drink. Though the Dutchman's Creek records are not definite, in all probability the cause of all his troubles and of his suspensions from the pastoral care of that church was his intemperance. As he always showed sorrow and penitence when called before the church, he was kept in the fellowship, but was not kept as pastor, though he was an able preacher and preachers were all too few among Baptists to meet the demand.

Before June, 1790, Cook had become a member of the Flat Rock Church, and was one of the delegates to the Yadkin Association of that year. In Asplund's *Register* he is represented as an itinerant minister of that church, which is called Hunting Creek; it was also often called Petty's Meeting House, the name Flat Rock not being generally used until near the close of the century. The records reveal that as itinerant Cook was carrying his evangelistic work far and wide—in the upper and in the lower end of the bounds of the Flat Rock Church, on Dutchman's Creek, at Bear Creek north of Mocksville, at Mr. Howard's on Elk Creek in Wilkes County, at Beaver Creek, also in Wilkes County, at a place called Hoppises, and in several stations in the present county of Iredell. Seemingly his work was very successful, for he was often asking Flat Rock Church for the right to hear experiences and receive members for baptism, and we know that in nearly all the

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<sup>19</sup> Fries, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, pp. 160, 374, 407, 434, 443; II, pp. 697, 767, 771, 898f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

places of his evangelistic labors arms of churches were established, which afterwards were constituted into independent churches, some of which continue with names unchanged to this day.

One of the arms of Flat Rock Church, Bear Creek, was constituted an independent church on March 30, 1792. Cook had no part in the exercises but his name heads the list of the members. Though there is no explicit statement in the records, for the next three years Cook seems to have served the Bear Creek Church as pastor, since his name heads the lists of delegates to the Association year by year.

After barely three years, however, Cook was in trouble with this church also, beginning in April, 1795, and so continued until he was dismissed by letter in November, 1805. All these troubles were caused by strong drink. In April, 1795, he was reported for keeping a tavern. While he acknowledged at the next meeting of the church that he had given room for such a report, the church found his explanation satisfactory. In the minutes of the meeting for January, 1796, however, it is revealed that Brother Cook needed "talking to"; at the September meeting of that year he was requested to attend the next meeting, which he did, and "made confession of drinking too much liquor." He was restored to fellowship again in May, 1797, and continued his ministerial functions and was one of the delegates to the Association of that year; but a minute for March 31, 1798, reads: "We do here certify that we have excluded William Cook for drinking too much spirits from time to time." After three years and more, on August 1, 1801, Cook again gave the church satisfaction and was received in full fellowship. He was no longer pastor, but he engaged in the usual ministerial functions of the day, such as the ordination of pastors and deacons in other churches; in the years 1803 and 1805 he was a delegate to the Association; in April, 1803, he was given a credential "to travel

and preach the Gospel." Only twice in this period did his drinking get him in trouble with the church; the first time was in May, 1804; the second on February 2, 1805; on each occasion he came forward and of his own accord made confession of drinking too much, which delinquency the church excused without causing any interruption of his ministerial work. He was dismissed by letter on November 9, 1805.

Cook's reason for leaving the Bear Creek Church was that he had recently accepted a call to assume the pastoral care of the Flat Rock Church, left vacant by the removal of their former pastor, Rev. William Petty. In this pastorate he continued the remainder of his life, six years, and was remarkably active in pastoral and ministerial work; but in this period also the records show that he had trouble because of his love for strong drink. Twice he came before the Flat Rock Church and confessed to "drinking too much," once in December, 1808, and again in March, 1811. On each occasion the members were satisfied and excused him. In his last two or three years he seems to have been too feeble for much work, but the church loved him and kept him as pastor until the end, as may be seen from the following from the minutes of the Flat Rock Church for April, 1812, written by that able man, known for his services in church and state, Thomas Wright: "On the 31st day of March, 1812, our beloved Brother Cook, pastor of this church, departed this life, aged 74 years—whose loss is greatly lamented by the Church."

As the records show, many of the early Baptist churches from the Forks of the Yadkin westward to the Blue Ridge owed their existence to his evangelistic labors. He was doubtless much handicapped by his liking for strong drink, but his brethren in his churches, fulfilling the law of Christ, and considering that they themselves were tempted likewise, learned to help him bear this great burden. He seems to

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

have been a man of large sympathetic heart, with a passion for preaching the Gospel, especially in destitute communities. It was this that brought him from Reedy Creek to Dutchman's Creek in 1772, and sent him on to Mulberry Fields and Boone's Ford in the early years, and afterwards to a dozen neighborhoods in the present counties of Yadkin, Davidson, Davie, Iredell, Wilkes and Alexander in all of which his persuasive evangelistic preaching won groups of converts whom he baptized and organized as arms of churches, and later helped constitute as independent bodies, many of which continue to this day. He also had a part in finding and encouraging many of the abler younger men who continued the work he had begun. And he was recognized as one of the leading men in the Yadkin Association. To no other man, perhaps, do the Baptists of that section of the state owe so much.

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## IX

### FLAT ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH

About eleven years after the constitution of the Dutchman's Creek Church, the church variously known as Petty's Meeting House, Hunting Creek, and Flat Rock was constituted on June 10, 1783. At present it is located a few miles west of Brooks Cross Roads in Yadkin County; there is no record of any other location but the name Hunting Creek, by which it is designated in the minutes of the Yadkin Association for the year 1794, 1795 and several other years before 1802 would suggest that its first location was a few miles south near the stream of that name, or that Flat Rock Creek, being a tributary of Hunting Creek, was not generally called by its present name till later. At any rate, the house of worship often called Petty's Meeting House in the minutes of the Yadkin Association, was already standing in 1783 and it was by the name Flat Rock that the church was constituted.<sup>1</sup> The church is nearly always called Flat Rock in the minutes of the church, very rarely Petty's

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<sup>1</sup>The first minute of the Flat Rock record book reads: "June 10, 1783. The Church of Christ constituted at Flat Rock, Petty's Meeting House, and William Petty came under the Imposition of Hands and received a Charge of the Pastoral care of the Church. Joseph Sanders and John Wright ordained deacons." The following from the 1795 MS. Minutes of the Yadkin Association, shows that the church was supposed to be on Hunting Creek: "Minutes of the Yadkin Association held at Petty's Meeting House on Hunting Creek, Surry County." Before 1802 the delegates to the Association mentioned in the minutes of the Church are credited either to Hunting Creek or Petty's Meeting House.

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Meeting House. From the year 1802 it is designated as Flat Rock in the minutes of the Yadkin Association. Of William Petty little or nothing is now known except what is found in the minutes of the Flat Rock Church, Bear Creek Church, and the Yadkin Association. In 1783 he was evidently a newcomer in the Forks of the Yadkin section, but from what place he had come is not told.<sup>2</sup> The minutes of the church indicate that his home was in the vicinity of the church, and that he had one or more sons and a daughter.<sup>3</sup> He remained with the church until September, 1800, when he resigned and obtained a letter of dismission, "as he is about to remove from us," so says the record.

During his ministry of seventeen years he had a leading, probably the chief, part in the development of the Baptists in the region westward in the present counties of Davie, Yadkin and Surry to the Blue Ridge. His work had three features, evangelization, instruction in right living, organization.

He first appears as an evangelist. Coming probably from the Mulberry Fields in Wilkes County,<sup>4</sup> he had before June, 1783, given his name to a meeting house a few miles west of Brooks Cross Roads, and gathered a group of adherents there who on the tenth day of that month were constituted

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<sup>2</sup> On a map of the upper tract of Mulberry Fields lands of the Moravians, made after a resurvey in 1799, a tract of land on the north side of the Yadkin, a short distance from Wilkesboro, is marked with the name William Petty. Possibly he had come from that section.

<sup>3</sup> Minutes of Flat Rock Church, November 12, 1791, May 14, 1796. In November, 1791, Mr. Petty's daughter, being underage, was taken away, without her father's consent, by a young man named Richard Stevens, which threw Mr. Petty into a great passion and caused him to "speak many harsh words," which the church, considering the circumstances, excused. The bridegroom and his brother, being members of the church, came under its discipline, the latter for concealing his brother's plan from the father. Both said that if they had it to do over again they would do as they had done, and were excluded. William Petty, junior, was in 1816, pastor of Zion Hill Church in Wilkes County, and in the Yadkin Association of that year served on the Committee on Foreign Missions.

<sup>4</sup> The minutes of a conference held at Reddie's River (Redday's), Wilkes County, October, 1783, are copied in the record book of the Flat Rock Church.

into a church. The list of members shows that among them were several who had been members of the disordered Dutchman's Creek Church located a few miles to the southeast; among these was William Cook, the former pastor of that church, who was now Petty's assistant, denominated itinerant minister, and empowered by the church to preach, hear experiences, and baptize. These two went in all directions preaching the gospel; to Elk River in Wilkes (now Watauga) County, through the entire extent of Iredell, and even to Warrior River in Alexander or Burke. Many of the arms were later constituted as independent churches: Grassy Knob in northern Iredell, in 1789; Eaton's, usually regarded as a continuation of Dutchman's Creek, in December, 1790, by Rev. William Petty and Rev. Andrew Baker; Bear Creek in western Yadkin, August, 1791; Cub Creek in Wilkes, May, 1794; Deep Ford, on Reddie's Creek in Wilkes County, June, 1796; Warrior River, May, 1799. Nearly all these churches have survived unto this day, most of them with their first names. They were all gathered in the same way. William Petty, William Cook, and other ordained ministers and exhorters belonging to Flat Rock Church, being authorized by the church, went forth and preached the gospel. Usually they went on the invitation of one or more families of Baptists who had their homes in the vicinity. At any rate, they preached the gospel, sometimes holding a meeting for several days. When the meeting was over, the preacher heard experiences and baptized in the nearest stream those who had been converted and desired baptism, who thus became members of the Flat Rock Church. When the interest and numbers of these members had become sufficient they built a meeting house and were set apart as an arm of the Flat Rock Church, and were ministered unto regularly by the ministers of the home church. As the arm, or branch, grew stronger, on petition to the mother church, it was constituted into an independent church

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and had its own organization, pastor and other church officers.

Thus Grassy Knob, which was about half way between Flat Rock and Mulberry Fields, was constituted by order of the Flat Rock Church in June, 1789. On its constitution the church had 65 members. Its first pastor was Lazarus Whitehead, one of the ablest ministers of that section. He served this church until April, 1797, when he accepted the work at Eaton's Church, and continued there until March, 1805, when he and his wife, Martha Whitehead, were granted letters of dismission, expecting "to move to the western country." He was prominent in the Yadkin Association, and except for the year 1801, was its moderator, beginning with the session of 1796 until he left the State. Like Petty and Cook he had the evangelistic impulse, and in 1790 was furnished by the Yadkin Association with letters to travel and preach the gospel. Thus he made his church at Grassy Knob like that at Flat Rock, a center of evangelistic work. Some indication of his character is found in the fact that he cultivated the friendship of the Moravian ministers and was highly regarded by them.<sup>5</sup> He was succeeded as pastor of Grassy Knob by Rev. John Angel, a man of like character, seemingly not quite so much of a leader, but of great wisdom. He had served eight years as a soldier in the Revolutionary War.<sup>6</sup> He continued pastor of the

<sup>5</sup> From the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2624 f., Salem Diary for 1799: "June 10, In the neighborhood of Hope—(on the eastern side of the Yadkin near the present town of Clemmons)—there was preaching by a Baptist minister, Mr. Whitehead. Br. Kramsch had been expressly invited, and Mr. Whitehead was very friendly, saying that he wanted a better acquaintance and fellowship.—July 14. Br. Kramsch had a visit from the Baptist minister, Mr. Whitehead, who spent the night with him. Br. Kramsch had lent him the book, *Haupt Inhalt der Lehre Jesu und Seiner Apostel (Essentials of the Doctrine of Jesus and His Apostles)*, which he returned with many thanks, rejoicing that in essentials he stood with us on the foundation of faith. He seems to be a man whose heart is not empty, who is not without knowledge of himself, and who greatly desires to lead souls to Jesus." Probably Whitehead did not know German but got some German friend to interpret the volume for him.

<sup>6</sup> Maj. J. H. Foote, *Outlines of History of Brier Creek Association*, p. 200. In the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, XXII, p. 56, a John



Grassy Knob Church until January, 1824, when he became pastor of Eaton's Church, where he remained until 1833; in 1832 he had become pastor of the Flat Rock Church and was still serving it and Swaim's Church in 1840, at a greatly advanced age. He was entrusted by the Association with the most important functions, and was its delegate to the General Meeting of Correspondence in 1815. With such men as its pastors the church at Grassy Knob continued the work begun by the preachers of Flat Rock Church, Petty and Cook, resulting in the establishment of many churches and the great development of the Baptists found today in Iredell and Alexander.

Doubtless through the labors of Cook, Whitehead, Angel and Rev. Brumley Coker (Cooker) of the Bear Creek Church of which an account will be given below, there were in 1802 sufficient Baptists in eastern Iredell County some ten or twelve miles northeast from Statesville for organization as an independent body. These were constituted a church by the name of New Hope.<sup>7</sup> It was a weak church and often without a pastor, except the ever faithful Enos Campbell and Thos. Belt; it was at times supplied by the ministers of neighboring churches. Beginning with 1825, however, it had several pastors of much ability. One of these was Elder John Lea who in 1824 had come from Caswell County, probably in company with Richard Yarborough, father of Elder T. H. Yarborough, and settled in the neighborhood of the New Hope Church, and was ordained its pastor in 1825, by Elders John Angel and

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Angel is listed as a pensioner of the Revolutionary War with the notation: "Cavalry, Infantry and Sergeant."

<sup>7</sup> In the Bear Creek Minutes the name is South Yadkin. In September, 1797, the Bear Creek Church had meetings in the houses of Br. Campbell and Br. Belt. In the summer of 1802, it was constituted an independent church which in the same year joined the Yadkin Association. The minute of the Bear Creek Church for June 5, 1802, reads: "A petition from the South Yadkin granted to dismiss for constitution, and dismissed Benjamin Belt, Enos Campbell, Sabina Belt, Zehaniah—, Ann Dixon." Campbell and possibly Belt were preachers. Both were delegates of the New Hope Church to the Yadkin Association in 1805.

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Joseph Pickler. He continued pastor for several years.<sup>8</sup> Lea moved to Tennessee in 1835. In 1836-1838 its pastor was Elder Abram Roby, who soon became prominent in the Yadkin Association; in 1839-1840, Elder Paul Phifer had assumed the care of the church.

Another church in this section was that of Powder Springs, which was located in Iredell County near the present Alexander County line, west of Turnersburg. It had only twelve members when it was admitted to the Yadkin Association in 1836, but its membership reached sixty-one in 1861. Before 1843 its name had been changed to Mount Vernon; it was dismissed to join the Brier Creek Association in 1868. Its pastor in 1839-1840 was Elder William Goforth. In the years 1836-1840 he was one of the leading ministers in the Yadkin Association. In 1838 he was appointed to write the circular letter, and to preach the introductory sermon in 1839. Afterwards he was prominent in the councils of the Brier Creek Association, where another of the name, Elder S. S. Goforth, labored in the years after the Civil War. In 1843 Elder William Garner was the pastor, who continued in that position until 1852, possibly longer.

Fourteen miles northward from Statesville and a few miles south of Grassy Knob is the Damascus Baptist Church, which was admitted to the Yadkin Association in 1839, reporting twelve members. Its first pastor also was Elder William Goforth; he had been succeeded before 1843 by Elder William Garner, who continued as pastor until the church was dismissed to join the Brier Creek Association in 1852.

In 1822 churches at Snow Creek and Second Creek were admitted to the Yadkin Association. The former was in Iredell County, fifteen miles northward from Statesville

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<sup>8</sup> For a sketch of Lea written by his son, see Borum, *Tennessee Baptist Ministers*, p. 438f.

## FLAT ROCK

near the place where is now a Methodist church of that name; it was dismissed at the same meeting to become one of the churches which formed the Brier Creek Association, in November, 1822. The Second Creek Church seems to have got its name from the stream of that name in Rowan County. It was a weak church, with a declining number of members, from twenty-four in 1823 to ten in 1830. Its pastor until 1828 was Elder Josiah Owens. In 1831 the Association appointed a committee to visit it, investigate and "act according to the circumstances." After that we hear no more of it.

Other churches in the development that started at Flat Rock were New Union and Sandy Springs. The former was located in eastern Iredell with Statesville as its post office. It had nineteen members when it was admitted to the Yadkin Association in 1836; its pastor in 1839-1840 was Elder William Richards; in 1843, Elder Peter Owens. It had nineteen members in 1836, twenty-two in 1839; thirteen in 1843; its name does not appear in the minutes of 1846.

Sandy Springs Church was constituted in 1840; it is located near the Yadkin-Iredell line in what was known as the Joyner Settlement. It had twenty-five members in 1843, when its pastor was Elder W. Chaffin, who was succeeded before 1846 by Elder William Garner. It is a flourishing church today.<sup>9</sup>

Having traced the first development of the Flat Rock Church which began with Grassy Knob, we consider another development begun about the same time. This, too, was promoted by the activity of Elder William Petty and the church at Flat Rock, and resulted in the constitution of the church called Eaton's. The minute of the Flat Rock Church providing for this bears the date of June, 1790, and reads: "Also agreed that the members at the lower

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<sup>9</sup> See article by L. J. Hamilton in the *Winston-Salem Journal* of April 18, 1931, in Scrap Book of Miss Flossie Martin.

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end of our church bounds on Dutchman's Creek be set apart as an arm of sd church." The actual date of its constitution, as shown by the minutes of the Eaton's Church, was December 16, 1790; the ministers who assisted were Rev. William Petty and Rev. Andrew Baker, the latter one of the ablest, wisest and most successful ministers in Wilkes County and the adjacent parts of Virginia, and already one of the leaders of the Yadkin Association, of whom more will be said later.<sup>10</sup>

It has usually been assumed that Eaton's Church is only a continuation of Dutchman's Creek, and in some respects this is true; it is located on the site of the former church, and serves the people of the same section, and doubtless profited from the continuation of influence of the former church. Of the seventeen members, however, who composed the new church at its constitution, the names of only three are found on the list of the former, and the most prominent of these is the Andrew Hunt, who was excluded from Dutchman's Creek. The fact seems to be that the dissension among the members of Dutchman's Creek in the Revolutionary period rendered it impossible for the church to serve the community as a whole, and drove some from the Baptist connection.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, after 1782 it had no pastor. Owing to these causes the church was broken up, to which there are several references in the Eaton's Church minutes. Another bond between the old and the new was Rev. William Cook, the founder and only minister of Dutchman's Creek, and one of the ministers of Flat Rock Church in

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<sup>10</sup> Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 279, etc.; Asplund, *Register*, under head of Brier Creek Church, Wilkes County; Minutes of the Yadkin Association.

<sup>11</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2804 f., Salem Diary for 1805. Kramsch had gone to Deep Creek to preach the funeral of George Lang. After the service a man offered to accompany Br. Kramsch for some miles. "He had formerly heard Brn. Soelle and Utley preach; had later joined the Baptists, but had left them again, because during the last war they had taken too much part in political disputes, and he had thought true Christians should not do that."



1790. The new church was to prove worthy of its relationship, and have no little part in promoting the progress of the Baptist cause in the section west of the Yadkin. I give some account of that contribution.

But first, attention is called to the fact that after the Revolution the Baptists found new conditions in this section under which they had to labor to win and keep members. In the earlier period frequent mention is made in the records of the Moravians of the activities of the Baptist preachers, in which more than once the declaration is found that the Baptists were the only ones in the country who went far and wide preaching and caring for souls.<sup>12</sup> After the Revolution, however, the Baptists had competitors in that field. The Moravian missionaries on their journeys west of the Yadkin found a number of denominational groups—Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Universal Redemptioners, and Lutherans, fierce competitors in winning members, each for his own church. "The first named," says the *Salem Diary*, reporting a visit of Br. Kramsch to that region in June, 1792,<sup>13</sup> "seem to be most opposed to us, though we cannot say that any of them seem to love us or desire to attend our services; instead it would appear that when it is announced that a Brother will preach on a certain Sunday, all denominations select the same day, to keep their people away, which was the case this time also. However, more than three hundred persons gathered and the house was completely filled."<sup>14</sup> Perhaps it was only accidental and not by design that the churches of other faiths had their services at the same time as the Moravian missionaries. Such was the case doubtless in the Deep Creek region, where in a radius of two or three miles the Moravians, Baptists and Methodists all had meeting houses in which on

<sup>12</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 321.

<sup>13</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, V, p. 2362.

<sup>14</sup> See also *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, V, pp. 2180, 2271, 2286, 2327.

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more than one occasion all three were holding services the same Sunday.<sup>15</sup> It was, however, at appointed meetings at irregular times and often not in churches, that the activities of Baptists and Methodists, in this section, in the quarter of a century following the close of the Revolutionary War, seemed most noteworthy to the Moravian annalists. Their references to them and comments on them are valuable in portraying the religious condition and interests of the times in Wachovia and the section of country to the west. For this reason some account is taken of them here.

First we consider the Baptists as revealed in the Moravian annals. In general the Moravians and Baptists were on most friendly terms. On one occasion, indeed, a Baptist preacher, seemingly out of zeal for his Doctrine of Election, after hearing a sermon by Br. Kramsch at Timber Ridge on the text, "God so loved the world," etc., "openly denied the truth that Christ died for all men, and warned the people not to believe it"; but such incidents were rare. We have seen how highly the Moravian ministers regarded Rev. Lazarus Whitehead.

Another Baptist preacher who was on most friendly relations with the Moravian brethren, and much respected and loved by them was John Tatum. In Asplund's 1791 *Register* he is named as the itinerant minister of Cross Roads Church, then belonging to the Sandy Creek Association.<sup>16</sup> In 1792, however, he had bought a farm and made his home about five miles north of Bethabara, and soon established Christian fellowship with his Moravian neighbors, who on October 7, 1800, did him the unprecedented honor of asking him to take part in the consecration of the new church at Salem.<sup>17</sup> The Moravian records speak

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<sup>15</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, V, p. 2266; VI, p. 2838.

<sup>16</sup> For the later history of this church, see Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 95f.

<sup>17</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2655, Minute of the Salem Board Meeting, October 7, 1800.

in warm terms of two other Baptist ministers of whom I have found little record elsewhere. One of these was a friend of Tatum's named Newman, who lived about thirty miles from Salem. The second was John Mond, who had come to Salem for the treatment for the dropsy and did not recover, but died on December 11, 1805. He waited with resignation for the end and his remains were buried eight miles away in the same graveyard in which John Tatum's body was lying. The records also mention by name two more Baptist ministers—Thomas Vass of Granville County (the grandfather of the late W. W. Vass, Jr.) who with his wife visited Salem on May 31, 1805, and Lewis Faulkner (Fortner), "the far-famed Baptist preacher," of Ararat, forty miles from Salem, who offered his church to Br. Benzein to preach in, which invitation Benzein did not accept, since he feared it might encourage Faulkner to ask to hold services in the Saal at Salem.<sup>18</sup>

Another entry in the *Salem Diary*, as recorded by Miss Fries, reveals that already in 1803, the Baptists of the Yadkin region were engaged in what remains a characteristic Baptist activity—a "big meeting." On July 31 of that year Br. Reichel had few hearers at his services at Hope, as three Baptist preachers were visiting in the neighborhood, and since Friday had been preaching morning and afternoon in the woods three miles away, and attracting to their services even the younger Moravians, and most of the Negroes also.<sup>19</sup>

For the purposes of this history these statements from the contemporary Moravian records are valuable, since they

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<sup>18</sup> Lewis Fortner (Faulkner) lived in Patrick County, Virginia, and soon after 1805 moved to Kentucky, and ended his useful career there. See Spencer, *History of Kentucky Baptists*, II, p. 265.

<sup>19</sup> There are many references to protracted meetings in the minutes of the churches at Flat Rock, Bear Creek and Eaton's. The Primitive Baptists are not following the methods of their fathers in not approving them. For a statement of the present Primitive Baptist view and practice, see Ashburn, *History of Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association*, p. 192f.

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reveal the Baptist preachers of that day as judged by the most enlightened religious communion of the State at that time. They show that they were not the ignorant bigots that they are sometimes represented to have been; here were two of them, Whitehead and Tatum, eager to learn and borrowing and reading the doctrinal books of the Brethren, even though they seem to have been in the German language. In most instances also they impressed the Brethren with their spirit of Christian brotherhood. They loved those of whatever name who loved Christ, and in particular they loved the Brethren because they preached the same Gospel of redemption. But with all their love for the Brethren they did not impose themselves upon them; Br. Benzein's fear that Lewis Faulkner would ask to preach in the Moravian Saal at Salem was idle. It was and is in accord with Baptist policy to admit preachers of the Gospel of all faiths to their pulpits, but the Baptist preachers spoken of in the Moravian records knew that it was contrary to the regulations and practice of the Moravians to open their churches for the use of Baptist preachers, and they had none the less love for them on that account. Nor were they grieved because they were not invited to participate in communion services in the churches of the Moravians. Furthermore, the Moravians did not withhold their appreciation for the great work the Baptist preachers were doing in preaching Christ and Him crucified and helping lost men find the way of life, sometimes by their long and faithful years of ministry transforming entire communities from wildness and sin to gospel order and newness of life. The records also reveal that the ministers of the Brethren found the Baptist preachers men of honesty, sobriety and good common sense in religious matters, not thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but humble seekers after truth, and finding them such, the ministers of the Brethren did not allow their own higher culture to prevent them from ap-



precipating and loving their less-privileged brothers and giving them what encouragement they could. For Baptists these things are pleasant to think upon.

The Methodists in this section were already numerous by the year 1800. The Yadkin Circuit had been formed in 1780, and extended up the Yadkin River to the Blue Ridge, and embraced the greater part of Western North Carolina from the Virginia line to that of South Carolina. In 1783 its churches had 348 members, in which year Guilford and Salisbury circuits were formed from it; in 1787 they had 537 members, and in 1796, 679, while the Salisbury Circuit reported 574; this circuit was one of the largest in the State and was served by some of the ablest Methodist preachers.<sup>20</sup> Little is said about these Methodists in the records of the Yadkin Association and its churches, but it is evident that they shared with the Baptists of this section the work of evangelizing the people and were the chief competitors of the Baptists in winning members for their churches. The Methodist preachers were numerous and aggressive, as is well indicated in the Moravian records from 1784 to 1805. On Easter Sunday, April 12, 1789, twenty-three Methodist preachers, who had passed through Salem on Good Friday, to hold a conference at McKnight's near Clemmons ville in Forsyth County, stopped on their return trip in Salem, and with them were their bishops, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury.<sup>21</sup> In 1790 the aggressive Methodists began to cause the Brethren trouble, holding meetings in various places. In May of that year two Methodist preachers had asked the use of the Saal in Bethania for preaching services, and not obtaining it, they preached nearby for two hours in George Hauser's shed. In July they repeated their request, which was again refused.<sup>22</sup> Again, in October, 1804, Alex-

<sup>20</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I.

<sup>21</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, V, p. 2266; Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 126f.

<sup>22</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, V, pp. 2306, 2314.

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ander McCain, who represented himself as a Methodist preacher,<sup>23</sup> boldly demanded the use of the Brethren's church in Salem for his preaching, and being refused preached in front of the Tavern, not once but several times, despite the protests of the Brethren and his being given to understand that it would be better for him to preach elsewhere.<sup>24</sup> On September 16, 1804, two Methodist preachers, who lived nearby, preached in the orchard behind the tavern in Bethania, to a crowd which was more orderly than was expected, although one woman "went into an ecstasy, and began to shout."<sup>25</sup>

The Methodist preachers were heard gladly and drew large crowds. On February 9, 1805, between 500 and 600 people gathered in Salem to hear the notorious Lorenzo Dow who was passing through Salem on his way to preach, according to announcement, at Bethania, where the church of the Brethren adjourned their regular Sunday morning service and joined the two thousand who had gathered in a nearby field and listened to his preaching which continued for three hours. Dow began immediately on his arrival, and when he had finished, without a word to anyone he mounted his saddle-galled horse and rode away, his long hair streaming in the cold February wind, to the wonder and amazement of all.<sup>26</sup>

These records indicate that the Baptists to a greater extent than the Methodists met the approval of the Mora-

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<sup>23</sup> I cannot find any mention of him in Methodist annals.

<sup>24</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, pp. 2772, 2773.

<sup>25</sup> One of the preachers who lived nearby was John Doub, father of Rev. Peter Doub, long on the faculty of Trinity College. This John Doub had a divining rod which led him and other people to believe there was gold in the vicinity. Many, with hopes of getting rich, were digging where the rod indicated there was gold. There is no report that their hopes were realized. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2785. See also *Centennial of Methodism in North Carolina*, p. 247f., and Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, pp. 95, 324.

<sup>26</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, pp. 2804, 2830. Dow's own account is in accord with this, except that his numbers are larger, 3,000 in each place.

vians; like themselves they were conservative, not given to excitement, but preaching a gospel of redemption by the atoning death of Jesus Christ. The Methodists on the other hand were aggressive, even to annoyance, in invading Salem and asking for the use of the Moravian Church, and too emotional for the staid Brethren; but many came to hear their preachers and the Baptists west of the Yadkin as elsewhere had to reckon with them, as they sought to evangelize the people and gather them into their societies. According to Grissom,<sup>27</sup> the Yadkin Circuit was formed in 1780. Its first pastor was Rev. Andrew Yeargan, who had been a member of the German Reformed Church. He and the other Methodist ministers preached in the churches of other denominations, in private houses, in sheds, in groves. Their first house of worship in this section was at Beals, in northwest Davie, built about 1780; others were at Whitaker's, west of the Yadkin near the intersection of the Winston-Salem and Farmington roads; McKnight's, near Clemmonsville on the east of the river, and Olive Branch, near Farmington. See also, the sketch by Rev. H. T. Hudson in Rumble's *Rowan County*, pp. 289ff.

The Methodists were already active in its territory when Eaton's Church began operations in December, 1790. It seems that the new church had difficulty in securing a pastor. Its business meetings were on the Saturday before the second Sunday in each month, at which time it sometimes had Rev. Lazarus Whitehead as moderator; and it is probable that on the following Sundays the church had preaching by such ministers as they were able to secure—Petty, Whitehead, Cook. In January, 1792, they made an unsuccessful effort to get the latter for their pastor; his services were engaged elsewhere. On April 29, 1796, the church chose Rev. Lazarus Whitehead for their minister, who, as we have seen, con-

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<sup>27</sup> *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 94.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

tinued as pastor until March, 1805. His successor in the pastorate was Rev. Brumley Coker (Cooker), who served from 1805 to the end of 1814, when having a difficulty with one of the members, even though exonerated by an able committee of helps from sister churches, he gave up the pastorate, early in 1815. On July 26, 1816, William Britton of the Flat Rock Church was called to the pastorate and continued in it until December, 1823. The next pastor was John Angel, who served the church in two pastorates, 1824-1828 and 1832-1833. In April, 1829, Rev. William Dowd accepted the pastorate and continued in it until August, 1830. Other pastors in this period were Elder Lowell, 1831; Rev. William P. Swanson, 1834-1835; Jon. Thomas, August, 1835, for a few months; Rev. Barton Roby, 1836-1842. Of these, Britton, Angel, Coker, Dowd and Roby were men of more than ordinary ability. Lowell and Thomas seem to have been licentiates of the church called in emergencies until a suitable pastor could be found. In these years the church had the occasional services of many preachers from neighboring churches— John McGlammere, August, 1805, and August, 1806; James Thompkins, March, 1811; Micajah Hollis, April, 1817; Joseph Murphy, November, 1815; Elder Reavis, July, 1818; Rev. William Hall, a Presbyterian, August, 1827. Some further account of some of these ministers will be given later.

After its organization in 1790, this church seems to have been somewhat circumscribed in its field of activity; to the south and west other Baptist churches occupied the ground, while to the north and east the Lutherans were strong, and the Methodists were aggressive in all directions. Accordingly, it was, in this period the mother of only two churches.

One of these was Providence, which was constituted in January, 1805, from members of the Eaton's Church, by Rev. Lazarus Whitehead and Rev. Andrew Baker. The



Providence Church was located in Surry (now Yadkin) County, probably near the site of Yadkinville.<sup>28</sup> Before its organization it had been an arm of Eaton's Church and had a new meeting house, and was near enough for the parent church at times to hold a church meeting in it. It had for its pastor Rev. John McGlamere, Jr., who was a strong contender for the faith as he conceived it, and having led the majority of the church to accept his views excluded all members who would not accept them. When the neighboring churches refused to hear the excluded members, they laid their grievances before the Yadkin Association, which appointed a committee of its ablest ministers and laymen to investigate and report. This committee labored on the matter for four years, 1809-1812, hearing both sides. In reports to the Association, the committee said that McGlamere and the church had excluded members contrary to the gospel order, and that this was acknowledged by McGlamere himself. They—the committee—had restored and given letters of dismission to many of the former members that they might unite with other churches, but the dissensions among them were so great that no new constitution was advisable.

The records reveal that McGlamere had acted arbitrarily in securing the exclusion of the members of his church. Some of them, however, had not come before the committee for letters to join other churches and had lost all connection with any church. The Association did not forget these, and as late as 1821 appointed a committee "to hear the acknowledgement of any of the Providence Church who was dropped out of union for disorder," which committee reported the next year that they had performed that duty. This is the last action of the Association with reference to the Provi-

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<sup>28</sup> This is indicated by the records of neighboring churches and of the Yadkin Association. Sometimes this church was called Davenport's.

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dence Church. It had started out with much promise, but was disrupted by wrangles induced by its opinionated minister and was, like Timber Ridge, finally lost to the Baptist cause in a region where it was much needed.

Attention should be called to the fact that in dealing with the Providence Church the Association and its committees assumed powers not clearly granted by its constitution, which explicitly declares that the Association "shall have no power to lord it over God's Heritage, nor shall it have any Classical Power over the Churches, nor shall they infringe any of the internal rights of any church in the union." The constitution did properly give the Association the right to pass on the orthodoxy and the orderliness of any church on its admission, and at any time to exclude any church found to be unorthodox and in disorder. Before the matter was brought to the attention of the Association there was a matter of dispute between the Providence and Deep Creek churches, and a committee of "helps" from other churches had been called to settle it. They reported their findings that the Providence Church was in disorder to the Association of 1809. The Association approved the report and the Providence Church was automatically dropped from the union. So far the Association was within the powers granted by the constitution; but when it went on to appoint a committee to hear the grievances of the excluded members of the Providence Church and sit in judgment on them, and to declare the church no longer a church, and to give letters to those who made acknowledgment of their disorder to join other churches, the Association and its committees were clearly invading the rights of the Providence church. It is the right of every Baptist church to determine its own membership. No association has the right to declare it dissolved, as was done in the case of the Providence Church. The excluded members had a right to

go apart and constitute a new church of their own and the Association would have had the right to admit or refuse to admit this church to its union. This was the extent of the powers granted to the Association by its constitution.

A further word should be said about Elder John McGlamere. The records indicate that he was at variance with Elder Joseph Murphy of the Deep Creek Church, doubtless on a matter of doctrine. It is more than probable that Murphy, a self-appointed custodian of Baptist faith, had found something wrong with the doctrinal views of McGlamere and had arrayed a party against him in the Providence Church with the result that the members of this party were excluded from the church. This exclusion might seem arbitrary, but there was nothing else to do. The committee called as helps by the two churches found the Providence Church and McGlamere in disorder—doctrinally—and the Association approved. McGlamere being declared in disorder was at a disadvantage, since hardly any church would want him for its pastor. Accordingly, it is not strange to find that McGlamere sought reconciliation with Murphy and others who claimed to be “distressed” with him. It seems that he was willing to have the points of doctrine in dispute argued before a committee and passed upon, but though several committees were appointed, they seem to have been unable to get the distressed parties before them, except possibly Elder Murphy, and accomplished little. The members of the several committees did, however, seem to justify McGlamere in their own minds, and a few years later we find a church, Cool Springs in Wilkes County, of which he was pastor, admitted to the Yadkin Association, which continued in it until 1822 when it was dismissed to unite with other churches in forming the Brier Creek Association. McGlamere was delegate from this church for the years 1819, 1820, 1821; he was its pastor until 1821; he was the As-

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sociation's messenger to other associations; was on the committee of arrangements, and preached on Sunday. In 1821, he was acquitted of a charge of falsehood brought by the Mayo Association, the claim being that he had falsely stated to the Cool Spring Church that he had not been excommunicated by the Yadkin Association; no falsehood, said the Yadkin Association, he had not been excommunicated. A few years later the Brier Creek Association took up the same charge; of which again, in 1826, he was acquitted by the Association. However, his enemies seemed implacable, and the Brier Creek Association even went so far as to charge that the elderly John Angel had told a falsehood to protect McGlamere. Probably, as an effort of appeasement, the Yadkin Association in 1829 passed a resolution, acknowledging that it had done wrong in including the name of McGlamere in its list of approved churches and ministers dismissed in 1822 to form the Brier Creek Association. After this I have found no further mention of him.

In the gathering and constitution of the Cross Roads Baptist Church in September, 1835, the leader was Rev. Wm. Garner, who until 1832 was an exhorter in the Eaton's Church, and on March 28, 1834, "after an examination was found sound in the faith and the doctrines of the Baptist denomination of this State, and was set apart by the imposition of hands and ordained to the ministry."<sup>29</sup> He continued to be pastor for several years; in 1843, Elder William Richards was reported as pastor. The Cross Roads Church was at Chinquapin Cross Roads, "five miles southwest of Huntsville" (Yadkin Association minutes for 1838);

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<sup>29</sup> From the Minutes of the Yadkin Association we learn his services were widely extended. The following from Foote, *Brier Creek Association*, p. 209f., indicates his character and the nature of his work: "Rev. William Garner, an uneducated man, preached many years in the bounds of this Association and delighted more in baptizing the willing and happy candidate than any man we ever knew. Thousands were converted under his simple but earnest style of preaching the gospel. He would often compose his own songs to suit the occasion. He died in Wilkes County and his aged companion still (1888) survives him."



another name by which it is sometimes called is Courtney. It is a prosperous church today.<sup>30</sup>

After obtaining a grant from the Flat Rock Church on August 20, 1791, such of the members of that church as found it more convenient met at Bear Creek on March 30, 1792, and were constituted an independent church by Rev. William Petty and Rev. Lazarus Whithead, while the sermon on the occasion was preached by Rev. Joseph Murphy. This church continues to this day, and is in the north western part of Davie County, northwest of Cana. The church chose John Beaman and John Revis as elders and Solomon Jones deacon. At its constitution a member of the church and its minister was Rev. William Cook. We have seen above how his weakness in strong drink caused Cook much trouble with the church and led to his giving up the pastorate in March, 1798. After that time for more than two years the Bear Creek Church had no regular minister but was served in administering the ordinances by invited ministers of neighboring churches until April 5, 1800, when Rev. Brumley Coker (Cooker) was ordained to the pastorate by Rev. Lazarus Whitehead and Benjamin Buckner. Coker and his wife Rebecca had joined the church by letter the preceding January. Whence he had come is not known, but he proved to be a man of ability and attained considerable prominence in the Yadkin Association, serving it as moderator for the five years, 1812-1817, with the exception of 1814. He was very successful as pastor of the Bear Creek Church; during his pastorate there he also served neighboring churches, one of them Eaton's for the ten years, 1805-1814. He died on December 1, 1817, aged 64 years, "much lamented by the church."<sup>31</sup> The next

<sup>30</sup> There is a good sketch of the Courtney Church by W. E. Rutledge, printed in a local newspaper and clipped and preserved in Miss Flossie Martin's Scrap Book.

<sup>31</sup> A minute of the Bear Creek Baptist Church for Jan. 3, 1818, reads: "The Reverend Brumbly Coker, a pastor of the church at Bear Creek was born August 12, 1753; departed this life the 1st day of December, 1817."

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pastor was the Rev. Joseph Pickler, who assumed the pastorate in June, 1818, and so far as incomplete minutes of the next few years show, continued in it until January, 1837.<sup>32</sup> Mr. Pickler was already pastor of the church at Forks of the Yadkin when he was called to the church at Bear Creek, and he served the former church for twenty-five years, 1815-1840. He was prominent in the Yadkin Association, and its moderator for fifteen years, 1824-1838. He was frequently to preach on Sunday at the annual meetings and in 1819 preached the introductory sermon. He was progressive; in 1822 was appointed to collect funds for domestic missions. He died at an advanced age on May 24, 1840.

The next pastor of the Bear Creek Church was Rev. William P. Swanson. He had been a member of Eaton's Church, to which he was admitted by letter in March, 1834, and on the same day had been licensed by the church "to receive experiences."<sup>33</sup> He was one of the group of members who, in September, 1835, having been dismissed from the Eaton's Church, helped form Cross Roads Church. He and his wife Emily joined the Bear Creek Church by letter in August, 1836, and he was chosen pastor at the January meeting, 1837. In that service he continued until March, 1839, when he and his wife were dismissed by letter. For his successor the church chose Rev. William Richards, who later became prominent in the Yadkin Association. His name first ap-

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<sup>32</sup> On January 2, 1836, Mr. Pickler requested the church members, if they wanted him, they would make it known by attending the meeting in February; the meeting for that month was not held "on account of the disagreeable weather."

<sup>33</sup> Swanson seems to have been a man of some spirit. Though he had been dismissed from Eaton's Church by letter in May 1835, a Brother Dismukes brought a charge against him before that church in August, charging him with "brawling, evil speaking and backbiting." The matter was immediately referred to a committee of five of the more able members, who brought in a report, saying that the charges were sustained. "Brother Swanson acknowledged to them all and promised that he by the help of God in the future would do so no more, and as such he was forgiven after an admonishment."

pears in the association minutes as a messenger from the Catawba Association in 1836. He is probably the William Richards of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, whose name is found in the list of Virginia Baptist ministers in the *United States Baptist Annual Register, 1833*.

The Bear Creek Church was missionary and, as we have seen, had a part in the organization of the New Hope Church when its ministers had gathered members. Another place at which it had an arm was Muddy Creek, two miles southward from the present town of Clemmons. The Baptists in this section had been holding meetings since 1781; probably Elder Joseph Murphy preached in this section as early as 1767. In 1813 the church became a member of the Yadkin Association. Its pastor was Elder Peter Potts, who, in 1804, was a delegate from the Fork's Church; he continued as pastor until 1832. Although in disorder at times, it continued in the Association until 1837, when, for continuing to violate the rules, it was expelled. In December of that year it had become an arm of the Bear Creek Church; seemingly this relationship did not last long. The Muddy Creek Church became extinct, but in 1866 was reconstituted; in 1874 it was moved to Clemmons, keeping the name "Muddy Creek" until May, 1887.<sup>34</sup> It is now a member of the Pilot Mountain Association, and in 1952 reported 513 in communion.

We return now to the Flat Rock Church. The next group which this church dismissed to form an independent church was that of Cub Creek in Wilkes County, whose petition was granted on May 17, 1794. It was constituted on June 10, 1794, and was admitted to the Yadkin Association that year. The minutes of the Flat Rock Church show that the ministers, Petty and Cook, had been preaching and baptizing in that region for some time before. The first and seemingly the only pastor of the new church was Elder John

<sup>34</sup> Sheets, *History of Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 113f.

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Prophet (Proffit), a man of moderate ability but most faithful. He had been a resident of this section for many years, and so had his wife (?) Susanna, both of whom were baptized at Mulberry Fields on November 28, 1773, when it was a branch of the Dutchman's Creek Church. From the beginning this church had only a few members. After 1811 it had no pastor, but in its weakness it was ministered to now and then by visiting ministers until 1818, when it reported to the Yadkin Association that finding itself too weak to keep up discipline, it had dissolved and given letters to its members to join other churches. It was later reorganized and was one of the constituent churches of the Brushy Mountain Association in 1872. Among its pastors have been such able men as L. R. Gwaltney, 1875-1877, and 1891-1901, and G. W. Greene, 1878-1891.

Another church for the constitution of which the Flat Rock Church furnished helps was that of Deep Ford, or Reddies' River, in Wilkes County. The minutes do not make it quite clear but only probable that the constituent members had been gathered under the preaching of the ministers of Flat Rock Church. In response to the petition laid before the church on May 14, 1796, Rev. William Petty and his son William were sent to assist in the constitution. The name of its first pastor is now unknown; in 1792 the Yadkin Association met with it; in 1801 it was in the Mountain Association, after which I find no reference to it.

Another arm of the Flat Rock Church which was constituted an independent church was Warrior River, which in May, 1799, had its petition for a constitution granted by Flat Rock. After this its name is not found in any Baptist annals that have come into my hands.

In December, 1805, the Flat Rock Church received a petition from the arm of the church at Mount Moriah for a constitution. After some delay the helps called advised



that no constitution be made, the reason not being indicated.

There were many other preaching places of the ministers of the Flat Rock Church in the early years. In June, 1800, Brother Cook was authorized to carry on a meeting in "the upper branch of the church" and "hold meetings and hear experiences" at Mr. Howard's on Elk Creek in Wilkes County. In July, 1790, he had been granted the same liberty at "the meeting house near Hoppises." In November, 1793, the brethren at Fox Knob were set apart as an arm of the church. Possibly the Fox Knob is the same as Grassy Knob, but more probably it was the group that afterwards was constituted as the Church of Fox Creek, also called Ausburn, of which Zachary Wells and William Ramey were ministers in 1796-1797.

Another church which was a part of the development instituted by William Petty at Flat Rock was that of Island Ford, which is located in Yadkin County three miles east of Jonesville. It was constituted with nine members in June, 1809, and joined the Yadkin Association the same year. In the first list of delegates of this church to the Association appears the name of Richard Cunningham, its first minister, who continued to supply the church until 1822.<sup>35</sup> Reference to him first appears in the minutes of the Yadkin Association as a delegate from the Brier Creek Church in 1803. After 1822 his name is no longer found in the minutes of the Association. He was a man of good ability; he was moderator of the Association in 1814, and preached the introductory sermon the same year, and again in 1817, and also preached on Sunday several years. He was often appointed a messenger of the Association to other bodies, and in 1815 was chosen to represent the Association at the General Meeting of Correspondence, but failed to attend. After this until 1827 Rev. Richard Jacks served the church, but

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<sup>35</sup> Ms. sketch of church in Wake Forest College Library made from the record book of the church.

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seemingly not as regular pastor. Rev. Barton Roby was chosen pastor in 1834 and continued as such until 1842, probably the time of his death. He was licensed to preach by the Society Church, of which he was a member. He was moderator of the Yadkin Association in 1839 and 1840. In 1839-1840 he was serving both Eaton's Church and Island Ford; he wrote the circular letter for the Association in 1836. In 1940, the Island Ford Church reported 121 members.

Another church in this same section was that called Reece's Meeting House, perhaps the same that is mentioned as a meeting place for the Dutchman's Creek Church on July 23, 1782. It continues to this day with name changed to Booneville in 1898, being in or near that town, "three miles south of Crutchfield Station in Yadkin County." The original Reece (Ries) house was on Deep Creek; Murphy's Deep Creek Church was not far away, but the Dutchman's Creek Baptists were also there and on one of his visits Soelle found that "many Baptists had gathered as Mr. Cook was to preach to them."<sup>36</sup> Owing to the proximity of Murphy's Church, Deep Creek, the Reece's Church was not constituted until 1835 or 1836.<sup>37</sup> Probably it was made up partly of those members of the Deep Creek Church who refused to follow that church when it joined the Fisher's River Association in 1832. Its first pastor was Daniel Windsor, who continued to serve it for several years; he was admitted by experience in August, 1809, to Flat Rock Church and was its pastor and one of its delegates to the Association during the years 1825-1839; he also represented the church at Reece's and was its pastor from its constitution for several years, probably until 1843, when he became pastor of Eaton's Church. In 1844 he began a pastorate of the Forks of Yadkin Church, which probably continued until

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<sup>36</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 790.

<sup>37</sup> No minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1835 are found; the name of Reece's Church first appears in the minutes of 1836.

his death in a few months. In 1940 the Booneville Church was one of the largest in the Yadkin Association with 325 members.

In 1837 the Yadkin Association admitted another church, that called Swaim's, which is located about ten miles north of the Flat Rock Church and about three miles southeast of Jonesville. Its first pastor, John Angel, was also the pastor at that time of the Flat Rock Church. In 1940 it was the largest church in the Association with 385 members. The church probably got its name from the fact that it was in a region first settled by a pioneer of that name, John Swim, called "old Swim" by Soelle, the Moravian missionary, in 1772.<sup>38</sup> One of this family, Elder Solomon D. Swaim, was ordained to the ministry.

Since Rev. William Britton may be regarded as typical of the abler ministers that served the churches in this section of the Yadkin Association before 1840, a somewhat fuller account of him is given here, while a more general discussion of the character and qualifications of ministers of the Yadkin Association will be given later.

The records of the Flat Rock Church indicate that Britton was a man of recognized influence and ability when he was received to the membership by experience at the August meeting, 1809. It was a time when the need of able ministers for the churches was beginning to be felt. Petty was gone, and Cook and Angel were at the age when most men give up their labors. Now, as if in answer to prayer, here were two men, William Britton, seemingly in the prime of life, and Daniel Windsor, probably a youth, both received the same day into the Flat Rock Church, both of whom became ministers, and of these Britton manifested his gifts at once, by gifts meaning ability to speak in church meeting and lead in prayer. It was a matter of joy for the Flat

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<sup>38</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 791.

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Rock Church, and there is a note of triumph in the minute of the very next meeting, that of September, 1809, which reads: "It was unanimously agreed that Brother Britton should go on in the freer use of his gifts as a preacher at any time or place where it may please God to call him. . . . It was then agreed that application be made to the next Association for privilege of ordaining Bro. Britton as a preacher." The Association left the matter to the church, which provided for the ordination the following May, securing for the purpose helps, ministers in this case, for the ordination of a minister, from the churches of Deep Creek, Bear Creek and Grassy Knob. After this, since the pastor, Elder William Cook, was incapacitated, Britton was acting pastor, and was duly elected to the full pastorate in April, 1812, and continued in that office until 1823, when he gave up his pastoral care, and at the same time gave up the like service in the Eaton's Church of which he had been pastor since July, 1816. The last record of him is found in the minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1824, at which he was appointed to preach on Sunday. In the meetings of the Association he had some prominence, preaching the introductory sermon in 1816 and 1820; serving on important committees, and as messenger to other associations, and being moderator for five years, 1819-1823.

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### JERSEY SETTLEMENT

In the preceding chapters some account has been given of the early Baptist development west of the Yadkin. Contemporaneous with this, except in the earliest years, was the development immediately to the east of the Yadkin in the region south of Shallow Fords extending eastward to the Uwharrie and beyond, chiefly in the present counties of Davidson and Randolph. Writers on Baptist history have found information about the early Baptists of this section scant, and scant it remains, even though much has been added in the last half century by the publication of *The Records of Moravians of North Carolina*, and Sheet's *History of the Liberty Baptist Association* and numerous sketches in newspapers. With the additional information from these sources we are able to write further of early Baptist activities in the section mentioned above east of the Yadkin. Geographically, these activities were in several distinct sections—first, that lying immediately east of the Yadkin, the River Settlement on the north and the Jersey Settlement to the south; second, Abbott's Creek; third, the section along the Uwharrie and its tributary, Caraway Creek. To these will be added what information may be gathered about early Baptist activities here and there in the territory north and east of Wachovia.

First, our concern is early Baptist development in the Jersey and River Settlements, of which about all that is known until the departure of Gano late in 1759 or early

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1760 has been told in our first volume, pages 265 ff., to which readers are referred. However, the promised further account of Gano's visit to Sandy Creek Association did not appear in the first volume, but being of importance, is given here. Our first account of that visit is found in Semple's *Virginia Baptists* (at page 45), published in 1810, and reads:

At their next association, multitudes both of friends and strangers came, many from a great distance. The Rev. John Gano, from N. England, was there. He was sent, it seems, by his association, to enquire into the state of these *New-Light Baptists*. He was received by Stearns, with great affection. But the young and illiterate preachers were afraid of him and kept at a distance. They even refused to invite him into their association. All this he bore patiently, sitting by while they transacted the business. He preached also every day. His preaching was in the spirit of the gospel. Their hearts were opened, so that before he left them, they were greatly attached to him. So superior were Mr. Gano's talents for preaching, that some of the unlearned preachers said they felt they could never preach again. This association was also conducted in love, peace and harmony. When Mr. Gano returned to his own country, being asked, what he thought of these Baptists, replied, that "doubtless the power of God was among them. That altho' they were rather unmethodical, they certainly have the root of the matter at heart."

The above statement, having been made by one of the earliest, ablest and most trusted Baptist historians has been often repeated and generally accepted by later writers on Baptist history, but it is easily subject to an interpretation, doubtless not desired by the writer, that, with the exception of Stearns, the early Baptist ministers of the Sandy Creek Association were simple-minded and unduly suspicious, the falsity of which supposition should be indicated in a history of North Carolina Baptists. In the first place, there are serious inaccuracies in Semple's account, which indicate that he was not writing with his usual care, but with partial information furnished by others. In 1759, Gano had been two years or more at the church in the nearby Jersey Set-

tlement, and had not been sent by "his association" in far away New England, "to enquire into the state of these *New-Light Baptists*." For the past two years he had had full opportunity to learn about the Separate Baptists from their ablest ministers, Daniel Marshall, the active pastor of the neighboring Separate Baptist Church at Abbott's Creek, and others who were "going everywhere preaching the gospel" with great success as far west as the Yadkin and northward into Virginia. An account of these men and their work would have made a very enlightening report by Gano to his association, which was that in Philadelphia, not one in New England. But Gano thought the Association would be better informed by a story of what he found at the meeting of the Association. Doubtless much of the substance of this report is indicated in Semple's account of it, given above. It is to be observed that like other reports of Gano, emphasis is on the important part Mr. Gano has in it. In what way it was conveyed to Semple is not known. We have seen that in some of its details it is inaccurate. It has striking similarities with a story of Gano's meeting with the uneducated General Baptist ministers on Tar River in 1754, in which also Gano's superiority is emphasized. Furthermore, it is partial. Its chief interest is the uneducated ministers of the Association; it makes no mention of such able ministers as Daniel Marshall, Philip Mulkey, Joseph and William Murphy, Dutton Lane, Samuel Harris, Joseph Breed, Joseph Read, many or all of whom attended this meeting and were much more representative of the Separate Baptists than the illiterate preachers. Doubtless, they had heard of trouble Gano caused the General Baptists in the east five years before. It is no conclusive mark of inferiority that they did not approve Gano until they had heard him. Nor does Gano conceal the fact that the unlettered men won his love and admiration.

On leaving North Carolina shortly after his visit to the

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Sandy Creek Association in October, 1759, Gano left no minister of the Regular Baptist faith in that part of North Carolina west of Granville County; all at Sandy Creek and Abbott's Creek and on Little River were Separate Baptists, and they were all busy in their own fields. For many years the Jersey Baptists had no pastor, Regular or Separate. After diligent search Sheets, the historian of the Liberty Baptist Association, said: <sup>1</sup>

After going over the ground again and again, and studying the subject as thoroughly as possible, I have no doubt, but that after Mr. Gano left they never had another pastor. . . . And the church, which seems to have been quite a strong one, finally scattered and became extinct, and that the organization in October, 1784, was probably constituted out of the members who were in the first organization or their descendants.

Doubtless Sheets was correct in his further statement: <sup>2</sup>

Though the organization seems to have passed out of existence, yet we have abundant reason to believe that Baptist principles did not cease to live in the community.

The reason that Sheets had in mind was that there had been continued strong Baptist interest among the people of this section for more than a century. There is, however, abundant historic evidence that Baptist principles continued to be cherished and promoted in this region after the departure of Gano. A statement of the means by which this was effected follows.

Probably as early as 1765, certainly not later than 1767, the aggressive Separate Baptist preachers of Anson County, with their evangelistic message, were making tours up and down both banks of the Yadkin. One of these was Joseph Murphy. As early as 1769 he had organized the three branches of the Shallow Fords Church and seen a meeting house built for each. Among their members were the "re-

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<sup>1</sup> Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 76, footnote.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 77.



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mains of Mr. Gano's church in Jersey-settlement." The preparation of each of these churches for organization was not the work of a day; probably it required several years and began as early as 1765. One of these branches was the Forks of the Yadkin Church, across the Yadkin from Jersey Settlement, convenient to the Jersey Settlement Baptists, and it was doubtless here that the greater number of the "remains of Mr. Gano's church in Jersey-settlement" found their new church home, of which, as one of the branches of Timber Ridge, some account has already been given.

Information for the account next following of the further Baptist development in this section has been found in several places as will be indicated, but found chiefly in *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* and the unpublished portions of Soelle's *Diary*, and in Sheets' *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*. It relates primarily to conditions among the Baptists in the River Settlements from November 1771 to January 1773, a short period, but of much interest, especially to Baptists, since it begins only a few months after Governor Tryon and his army had encamped near the Jersey Church, burned homes and farm buildings, laid waste the ripening fields of grain and raided the Baptist neighborhoods, made more than forty of the men prisoners, and carried them in his train to Hillsboro to be tried for treason. Our account will show that in the months following these terrible sufferings the Baptists in this section had not lost their faith in God and their interest in religious work.

In November, 1771, the Moravian missionary, Br. George Soelle visited the Baptists east of the Yadkin.<sup>3</sup> He came on the invitation of John Pipes, seemingly a refugee Baptist from this section, whom Soelle had found forty miles distant in a new settlement on Deep Creek. It is clear that Pipes had heard Soelle preach, and had learned that he

<sup>3</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 795.

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was ready to go anywhere needed to preach, and he, Pipes, asked him to visit the destitute people in the settlements to the east of the Yadkin, where the people had no preacher and were hungry for the gospel. By Pipes's arrangement, Soelle went to the home of George Reed, a prominent Baptist twenty miles south of Salem, and spent the night there, as he did on each of his several subsequent visits to this section. The next day Soelle preached at a schoolhouse nearby, where school was kept by a man named Baumann who had come from Virginia in 1770, and who was "serving as exhorter in that neighborhood." Of George Reed Soelle says: "He is a man who loves the truth, and gladly listens, but he has as yet little light," probably meaning only that Reed knew less about the Atonement than the ministers of the Moravian Brethren thought all should know. The indications are that George Reed at this time was a substantial citizen and much interested in the religious welfare of those who lived in the River Settlements. He felt it his responsibility to provide preachers and teachers for them; he encouraged Soelle to come and preach; at least once he went to Salem and brought him to his home, where the next day he preached to one hundred people. As often as Soelle was to preach it was Reed who saw that notice of time and place was given to the people, some of whom lived at considerable distances from Reed's home. He was interested also in the building of an early meeting house in this section, five miles south of his home, which in the early years served as a place of worship for families who since his time worshipped at Reed's Cross Roads. He is worthy of being the earliest of those of the Reed name who through all the years have contributed so much to the progress of religion in this section.

It was on Soelle's last visit, January 17, 1773, that Reed went with him to the meeting house. It was not far from the location of the Jersey Settlement Church, which had

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probably been destroyed while Tryon and his army were encamped near it. This new church was clearly intended to be central and convenient to a larger number, but on their arrival Soelle and Reed found only a very few gathered for worship, probably because there had been no notice given that Soelle would come, and it was expected that the preacher would be Baumann, the schoolmaster and exhorter, who had recently been ordained, and in fact, Baumann did preach. Soelle's account of this last visit follows:

"Home of George Reed, South Fork Settlement. I visited their meeting which is five miles further away. The meeting was very small. Their preacher is named Bauman, one of the Baptists, who has recently received permission to preach. I asked him to speak first, which he did, and spoke for nearly two hours on John 3:16, but such a confused mixture that one did not know what he wanted to say. As the time was nearly up I spoke but briefly, and on words from the same chapter. . . . In three weeks there will be a great Baptist meeting here to which I am invited. . . . I must note that here and in Virginia the Baptists are very active, and are stirring up many people, but in Pennsylvania they sleep."

On his first and later visits, Soelle tells that the preaching services were attended by Mrs. Jemima Merrill and her children, whose home, according to Sheets, was "Some four miles south of Lexington, and about two miles east from Jersey church," probably six or eight miles south of Reed's home. Until well into the present century it was nothing uncommon for country people to travel such distances to hear preaching. Mrs. Jemima Merrill was deeply religious, and desirous that her children should have religious training. She was the widow of Captain Benjamin Merrill, said to have been a deacon of the Jersey Church, whose execution "for high treason," under the auspices of Governor Tryon of North Carolina, she and these children had on the previous June 19, 1771, witnessed at Hillsboro. To this there are two references in Soelle's *Diary*, in both of which it is said, "Mrs. Merrill cannot forget the sad fate

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of her husband." In *The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 795, it is said that Soelle "unfortunately does not tell what the sad fate was." However, before Miss Fries was writing, the story had already been told with some fullness by Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, pp. 158-163. From this we learn further:

The widow was blind. Whether the blindness was caused by some natural defect or from excessive grief at the sad and untimely death of her husband was not known. She was never herself after the death of her husband—she never recovered from the shock. She was almost crazed at the cold, cruel fate which befell her in thus being bereft. She suffered great mental distress and spent much of her time walking to pass off the melancholia which clung to her only to darken her days of grief and bitterness. Her mind was scarcely ever free from her affliction while awake.

From both church records and tradition it is known that in all her sufferings Mrs. Jemima Merrill remained faithful and active religiously. We have seen that she carried her children miles from her home to hear Br. Soelle as often as he preached at Mr. Reed's. It is evident that the Baptists then had no church in the River Settlements. Soon afterwards the Baptists established a church at Boone's Ford, which Mrs. Merrill joined by letter on September 17, 1774. She reared a large family who followed their mother in religious interests. In the record books of the churches, east and west of the Yadkin, the name Merrill often appears. Rev. George L. Merrill, a great-great grandson, graduated from Wake Forest College in 1888, and was thereafter for many years a prominent and beloved minister in the Sandy Creek and other associations.

After January 17, 1773, we have no further record of Baumann, nor certain record of the church at which he preached. However, this small group seems to have survived the troublous times of the Revolution and to be continued in the present Reeds Cross Roads, or Reeds, now a church of the Liberty Association with something over four hun-



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dred members.<sup>4</sup> Until October, 1839, however, it was not a regularly constituted church, but an arm of the Jersey Church.

Although we have no definite record of further development at the place where Baumann preached, we do have recorded the beginning of a Baptist development further north, but in this same general section, at Boone's Ford, the first notice of which is in the record book of the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church (of which an account is given in another chapter), which tells that four were baptized into its membership on September 19, 1773. In the minutes of the Dutchman's Creek Church it was not told who the preacher was who won and baptized the four at Boone's Ford, the assumption being that it was Rev. William Cook, the Dutchman's Creek minister, but in the next minute referring to Boone's Ford, it is definitely told that the minister who "received and baptized" all the fifteen new members was none other than Rev. John Gano, the former minister of the Baptist Church in the Jersey Settlement. The minute reads in full:

March the 20 (1774) There was aded to the Church Fifteen members by Baptism Their names are

|               |                |                 |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Thomas Turner | Thomus Brisco  | Caterean Turnor |
| John Turnor   | Wagstaf Canade | Rebacah Turnor  |
| Thomas Adams  | Daniel Lewes   | Ann Turnor      |
| Richard Barns | Isaac Eaton    | Unity Haden     |
| George Parks  | Sarah Turnor   | Agnes Parks     |

These all received and Baptized by John Gano at Boons Foard.

A month later, April, 19, 1774, twelve others, six males and six females, and on September 17, 1774, six others, were received by baptism and two by letter, among the latter being Mrs. Jemima Merrill. In the list of early mem-

<sup>4</sup>The location of Reeds corresponds roughly with the meeting house mentioned by Soelle, and the land for the present Reeds was bought from George Reed, with whom Soelle spent the night when in this neighborhood. Sheets, in his *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 95 f., gives a good account of Reeds Church, which he says was established before 1790.

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bers of the church at Boone's Ford are the names of prominent families near the Ford on the west, such as Turner and Hunt, as well as of families, such as Merrill and Durham, who, as we know from other sources, were prominent in the Jersey Settlement. After September, 1774, no account is given of baptisms at Boone's Ford, but religious interest there continued. On October 16, 1777, on petition, Boone's Ford became an independent church and continued as such for only a few months, until May 8, 1778, after which time for an indefinite period it, as well as Dutchman's Creek, was under the pastoral care of Rev. William Cook. On July 8, 1778, it was granted the right to excommunicate members. On September 10, 1782, the entry to the record book of Dutchman's Creek reads: "Bro. Benjamin Martin appointed to give notice to the brethren at Boone's Ford." After that no further reference to Boone's Ford is found.

Though the name of John Gano, except as told above, is not mentioned in connection with the 1774 additions at this place, it is probable that all were due to Gano. We have seen that he had been pastor of the church at the Jersey Settlement in the years 1758-1759, but had abandoned his pastorate at the time of the incursion of the Cherokees. He seems now to have returned on a visit, of which no account is given elsewhere. At any rate, finding a religious interest developed around Boone's Ford, only a few miles from the Jersey Settlement, but beyond the river, he helped promote it in the way indicated.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Only in the record book of the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church is there any contemporary reference to the visit of Rev. John Gano to this region in 1773-1774, and there is only scant mention of another visit of Gano in 1790, when it is told in Benedict's *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 316, that he had come to the section with his son, Rev. Stephen Gano, who at this time baptized "the widow of Capt. Thomas Bryant, and daughter of Col. Jonathan Hunt" who three years later was to become the second wife of the elder Gano. Possibly Gano made other visits to the scene of his former labors in and around the Jersey Settlement. In 1773-1774, he was co-operating with the Dutchman's Creek Church, and had probably come after getting in communication with it. Probably by agreement the pastor, Rev. William Cook, worked west of the River, and for a short period Gano preached in his former field on the east, where he had not been forgotten.

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It is convenient here to take account of visits of Gano to this section more than twenty years later, in 1793, and again in 1794, in August of both of which years he attended the meetings of the Yadkin Association. He had come primarily to protect a land title, but his coming was of more importance to him, since on it he married his second wife, "the widow of Captain Thomas Bryant and the oldest daughter of Colonel Jonathan Hunt," the latter, as well as his daughter, having been members of the Dutchman's Creek Baptist Church in its early days. The record book of Eaton's Baptist Church shows that on March 25, 1793, "Bro. Isaac Eaton was ordained deacon by the Revs. John Gano and Lazarus Whitehead," that John Gano was present at the meeting on July 25, 1793, and again on September 27, 1794, at which time "Sister Gano and Sister Phebe Adams requested letters of dismission which were granted." <sup>6</sup>

Gano has been styled by Benedict "one of the most eminent ministers in his day. In point of talents he was exceeded by few, as an itinerant he was inferior to none who have ever traveled in the United States, unless it be the renowned Whitfield." Since he had such an important part in the early Baptist development in North Carolina, extracts are given in the footnote below from Benedict's biography of Gano, in which is included the estimate of him

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<sup>6</sup> Of this matter Gano says in his *Memoirs*, page 123 ff., "Here I found and obtained another companion. She was the widow of Captain Thomas Bryant, and daughter of Colonel Jonathan Hunt. She was a communicant of a Baptist Church in that neighborhood. As she could not adjust her matters, so as to go immediately with me to Kentucky, I went to Charleston in South Carolina, where I had formerly visited. . . . From here I went further southward, and after an absence of nine weeks and three days, I returned to my wife. . . . The September following (1793) I returned to Kentucky, but without Mrs. Gano, as she was not then ready to move. The next spring—that of 1794—I went to North Carolina, but found that it would be inconvenient for my wife to remove before fall; I therefore made a visit to New York and Rhode Island, accompanied by my wife's son, Morgan Bryant. My old friends were much pleased to see me; and I arrived back again by the time my wife had appointed to go to Kentucky. . . . We started for Kentucky on the 29th of September, 1794, and arrived safely without anything material taking place.

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by Dr. Richard Furman who was personally acquainted with him in the different stages of his life.<sup>7</sup>

We return now to the story of the development in the Jersey and the River Settlements. Though no further reference to Boone's Ford is found, it is probable that some of its members joined in the constitution of the present Jersey Church on October 16, 1784, with fourteen members, which, in accord with the style of those days was called "The Church of Christ at the Jersey Settlement Meeting House." The ministers officiating at the constitution were Elders Drury Sims (Syms) and William Hill. The former had been pastor of the church at Rocky River, Chatham County, about four miles north of Siler City. Our first information of him comes from Br. Soelle's Diary. In March, 1772, he and two others had stopped in Salem Brothers House to buy food.<sup>8</sup> Finding them in the kitchen Soelle began to talk to them about the new birth, when Sims exclaimed: "Thanks be to God that I have found a child of God in this house!" He also begged Soelle to visit him, which Soelle did on his missionary tour of August, 1772, which had carried him through the German settlements on the Alamance and Stinking Quarter. As illustrative of the life of the abler Baptist ministers of that day I am giving the following from Soelle's diary, as translated by Miss Fries:

I went to Rock(y) River to find the Baptist preacher; Syms is his name. . . . I had much difficulty in finding him, and rode around for eighteen miles, but reached his home at sunset. He received me with joy. He is a very poor man, for it is the method and plan of the Baptists to give their preachers nothing, and they must support themselves by the work of their hands although they are expected to care for and visit those entrusted to their care, which does not meet with the approval of some of their members. I thought that he looked troubled so next morning told him I wished to visit a neighbor, a German named Seiler, and that he might

<sup>7</sup> This footnote is at end of the chapter, page 173.

<sup>8</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 800.



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summon his neighbors for a meeting in the evening. . . . Between seven and eight a number gathered and I spoke to them on I Tim. I:15, "This is a faithful saying," etc. Then Mr. Syms spoke briefly, and wished that the doctrine they had heard might sink deep roots in their hearts.<sup>9</sup>

Sims served as pastor until September 8, 1789, when he and his wife were dismissed by letter, and as may be seen in Asplund's *Baptist Register*, 1791 edition, went to Laurens County, South Carolina, and became pastor of the Big Branch of Enoree Church in the Bethel Association.<sup>10</sup> In January, 1793, Thomas Durham, whom Asplund found in 1790 as a licentiate of Rocky River Church of Anson (Montgomery) County, a young married man who had recently moved his membership to the church, was ordained as its pastor, and gave the church three Sundays of his time, and the church purchased a Negro to support him. From 1793 until 1807, he was for most of the years a delegate of his church to the Yadkin Association, in which he attained considerable prominence, serving it as moderator in 1801, 1805, and 1807, and preaching on Sunday in 1794, 1795, 1801, 1803, and 1807. His name does not appear in the Yadkin Association minutes after 1807, which would suggest that he was no longer serving the Jersey Church. The next pastor seems to have been Elder Isaac Wiseman, whose name is on many of the lists of delegates sent by the Jersey Church to the Association beginning with 1802 and ending with 1817, and who preached on Sunday in 1809. In 1818 the Jersey Church was dismissed from the Yadkin Association, and joined the Pee Dee. It was one of the constituent churches of the Yadkin in 1790.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 40, is mistaken in thinking that it was the Rocky River of Anson County, with which Sims was connected. It was the Rocky River of Chatham County.

<sup>10</sup> See also Leah Townsend's *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, pp. 183, 184, 220, 221, 226, 227. Sims' will was dated January 31, 1832, and proved November 27, 1839.

<sup>11</sup> Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 78, says that while the records are not clear it appears that Durham remained as pastor until

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Another church to the east of the Yadkin was that called Little Yadkin, seemingly because its location was on the stream of that name, to the north of Wachovia. Asplund gives 1785 as the date it was founded, and it was already in existence when the North Carolina churches which were members of the Strawberry Association had their first meeting at Petty's Meeting House in October 1786. At that time John Stone was pastor of Little Yadkin, and was appointed one of the delegates to the parent association. It was probably composed in part at least of those who had been members of Elder William Hill's church, of which there is no further account after this time. For our further information about the Little Yadkin Church and its pastor the sources of information are the minutes of the Yadkin Association and of Eaton's and Bear Creek churches. Beginning with the associational meeting of 1788 Elder Stone and his church were in trouble, and a committee appointed to investigate reported that they had advised the church of the misconduct of their minister and advised them to admonish him. This the church seems to have done with success and its delegates were admitted to the Association of 1794. This is the last record of Stone, but the other delegate on that occasion was John Stevens, who was one of the members who laid their grievances before the Association, when the church, being advised to get helps from sister churches, asked the churches at Eaton's and Bear Creek to assist them. The result was that the aggrieved members, headed by John Stevens, were admitted to Eaton's Church. The dissension seems to have been on matters of doctrine. On petition the Yadkin Association dismissed Little Yadkin Church in 1807, after which no record of it exists.

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1812, and that thereafter the church had no pastor until July, 1817, when Elder Nathan Riley took the charge. Both suppositions seem to me improbable. In 1804 and 1805 Micajah Hollis was a delegate from the Jersey Church to the Association; he preached on Sunday in 1807.

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, pp. 306-323.

JOHN GANO was one of the most eminent ministers in his day; in point of talents he was exceeded by few, and as an itinerant he was inferior to none, who ever travelled the United States, unless it were the renowned Whitefield. He was born at Hopewell, in New-Jersey, July 22, 1727, was converted soon after he arrived at manhood, and was ordained in the place of his nativity in 1754. His progenitors, on his father's side, were from France, on his mother's from England. His great-grand-father, Francis Gano, fled from Guernsey, in the time of a bloody persecution. . . .

After becoming satisfied that preaching would be his employment, he applied himself with much assiduity to studies preparatory for it, which he continued, with some interruptions however, for two or three years. . . .

At the next meeting of the Philadelphia Association, that body was again petitioned to appoint some one to travel to the south. Messengers had also come on from Virginia, for the purpose of procuring a preacher to labour and administer ordinances among them. As no ordained minister could conveniently go, Mr. Gano was urged to accept ordination, and undertake the journey. He pleaded against it his youth and inexperience; but the messengers from Virginia, and his brethren at home, united their importunities, and he engaged in the mission. He was ordained in May 1754, and set out in a short time after. In this journey he went as far as Charleston, South-Carolina, and travelled extensively throughout the southern states. . . .

Our itinerant continued southward until he arrived at Charleston, and there, and in its vicinity, he preached to good acceptance. His account of his first sermon for Mr. Hart, in Charleston, is as follows: "When I arose to speak, the sight of so brilliant an audience, among whom were twelve ministers, and one of whom was Mr. Whitefield, for a moment, brought the fear of man upon me; but blessed be the Lord, I was soon relieved from this embarrassment; the thought passed my mind, I had none to fear and obey, but the Lord."

On his return from Charleston to the northward, he visited an island where he was informed there never had been but two sermons preached. The people soon collected together, and he preached to them from these words, *Behold the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you.*

. . . It was not long after Mr. Gano had returned from this journey, before he was again induced, by repeated solicitations, to set out on another, to the southward, in which he was gone about eight months, and was happy to find, in many places, the fruits of his labours in his former visits. Soon after he returned from this excursion, he was invited by an infant church in North-Carolina, which he had raised up in a place called the Jersey Settlement, to remove and become its pastor. Messengers came to Morristown, a distance of about eight hundred miles, for the purpose of soliciting that church to give him up. They at first refused, but afterwards concluded to leave the matter to his own choice. He therefore concluded to go; but at the same time informed the Morristown church, it was not for want of attachment to them. The church in North-Carolina, he considered, was wholly destitute, and there was besides, a wide field for gospel labour. At the Jersey Settlement he continued about two years; the church became large, and his labours were abundantly useful throughout a wide and destitute region. But a war breaking out with the Cherokee Indians, he was obliged to leave the country, and returned to New-Jersey. About this time the foundation for the first church in New-York was laid by Mr. Miller of Scotch Plains; the church in Philadelphia had also been lately deprived of its pastor, by the death of Mr. Jenkin Jones. Mr. Gano preached for



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some time alternately at both cities, but about the time the church in New-York was organized, he went to live among them, was chosen its pastor, and continued in that office about twenty-five years, excepting the time he was obliged to be absent on account of the war. Some account of his ministry here, and of the progress of the church while under his care, may be found in its history under the head of New-York.

During most of the revolutionary war, Mr. Gano was a chaplain in the army; and by his counsels and prayers, encouraged the American hosts in their struggles for freedom from the dominion of a foreign, oppressive yoke.

On the return of peace, he returned to his pastoral station, and began to collect the church which had been scattered to many different places. Out of upwards of two hundred members, of which it consisted at the time of its dispersion, he collected at first but thirty-seven; but his congregation soon became large, others of the scattered flock came in, a revival commenced, which prevailed extensively, and at one communion season, near forty young persons were added to their number. In this prosperous manner this successful minister recommenced his labours in New-York, and every thing appeared promising even to the time he projected his removal to Kentucky. This removal was as unexpected to the church, as it was surprising to his friends. . . .

Having resolved on removing, he sold his estate, commenced his journey, and on June 17, 1787, landed at Limestone, and immediately repaired to Washington where he tarried a while; he then went to Lexington, and finally settled near Frankfort, where he died in 1804, in the 78th year of his age. The labours of this aged minister were owned of God for good in Kentucky; but there is reason to believe, that neither his usefulness nor wordly comforts were so great as he expected. . . . By most of the Kentucky brethren he was honoured and esteemed, and by all of them his death was much lamented. In 1793, he made a visit to North-Carolina, where he married, for his second wife, the widow of Capt. Thomas Bryant, and daughter of Col. Jonathan Hunt, formerly of New-Jersey, one of his old neighbours and unchanging friends. In her he found an amiable help-meet for his declining years. She had been baptized by his son Stephen, three years before, that is, in 1790, when they visited North-Carolina together. She still survives him, and resides at his late dwelling, near Franfort, Kentucky. While he was waiting for this new companion to arrange her affairs for a removal, he visited Charleston, South-Carolina, and also as far northward as his son Stephen's in Providence. . . .

The following summary view of the character of our venerable Sire, was drawn in consequence of a particular request, by Dr. Richard Furman, of Charleston, South-Carolina, who was personally acquainted with him in different stages of his life.

"The late Rev. John Gano will be long remembered with affection and respect in the United States of America. Here was his character formed; and here, as on a conspicuous theatre, were the actions of his amiable, pious and useful life exhibited.

"He was, in person, below the middle stature; and when young, of a slender form; but of a firm, vigorous constitution, well fitted for performing active services with ease, and for suffering labours and privations with constancy. In the more advanced stages of life his body tended to corpulency; but not to such a degree as to burden or render him inactive. His presence was manly, open, and engaging. His voice strong and commanding, yet agreeable, and capable of all those inflections, which are suited to express either the strong or tender emotions of an intelligent, feeling mind. In mental endowments and acquired abilities he appeared highly respectable;



## JERSEY SETTLEMENT

with clear conception and penetrating discernment, he formed, readily, a correct judgment of men and things. His acquaintance with the learned languages and science, did not commence till he arrived at manhood, and was obtained chiefly by private instruction, but under the direction of a clerical gentleman, well qualified for the office. To the refinements of learning he did not aspire; his chief object was such a competent acquaintance with its principles, as would enable him to apply them with advantage to purposes of general usefulness in religion, and to the most important interests of society; and to this he attained.

"His mind was formed for social intercourse, and for friendship. Such was his unaffected humility, candour, and good will to men, that few, if any, have enjoyed more satisfaction in the company of his friends, or have, in return, afforded them, by their conversation, a higher degree of pleasure and moral improvement.

"His passions were strong, and his sensibility could be easily excited; but so chastened and regulated were they by the meekness of wisdom, that he preserved great composure of spirit, and command of his words and actions, even in times of trial and provocation, when many, who yet might justly rank with the wise and good, would be thrown into a state of perturbation, and hurried into extravagance.

"As a minister of Christ, he shone like a star of the first magnitude in the American churches, and moved in a widely extended field of action. For this office God had endowed him with a large portion of grace, and with excellent gifts. 'He *believed*, and therefore *spake*.' Having discerned the excellence of gospel truths, and the importance of eternal realities, he felt their power on his own soul, and accordingly he inculcated and *urged* them on the minds of his hearers with persuasive eloquence and force. He was not deficient in doctrinal discussion, or what rhetoricians style the demonstrative character of a discourse; but he excelled in the pathetic, in pungent, forcible addresses to the heart and conscience. The careless and irreverent were suddenly arrested, and stood awed before him; and the insensible were made to feel, while he asserted and maintained the honour of his God, explained the meaning of the divine law, shewing its purity and justice; exposed the sinner's guilt; proved him to be miserable, ruined, and inexcusable, and called him to unfeigned, immediate repentance. But he was not less a son of consolation to the mourning sinner, who lamented his offences committed against God, who felt the plague of a corrupt heart, and longed for salvation; nor did he fail to speak a word of direction, support and comfort, in due season, to the tried, tempted believer. He knew how to publish the glad tidings of salvation in the Redeemer's name, for the consolation of all who believed in him, or had discovered their need of his mediation and grace; and to him this was a delightful employment. Success attended his ministrations, and many owned him for their father in the gospel.

"The doctrines he embraced were those which are contained in the Baptist Confession of Faith, and are commonly styled Calvinistick. But he was of a liberal mind, and esteemed pious men of every denomination. While he maintained with consistent firmness, the doctrines which he believed to be the truths of God, he was modest in the judgment which he formed of his own opinion, and careful to avoid giving offence, or grieving any good man, who differed from him in sentiment. Hence, he was cordially esteemed and honoured by the wise and good of all denominations." \*

"His attachment to his country as a citizen, was unshaken, in the times which tried men's souls; and as a chaplain in the army, for a term of years, while excluded from his church and home, he rendered it essential service. Preserving his moral dignity with the purity which becomes a gospel minis-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

ter, he commanded respect from the officers; and by his condescension and kindness, won the affections of the soldiers, inspiring them by his example, with his own courage and firmness, while toiling with them through military scenes of hardship and danger.

"He lived to a good old age; served his generation according to the will of God; saw his posterity multiplying around him; his country independent, free and happy; the church of Christ, for which he felt and laboured, advancing; and thus he closed his eyes in peace; his heart expanding with the sublime hope of immortality and heavenly bliss."

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\*An honourable testimony was borne to his ministerial abilities and service, by a respectable clergyman of the Episcopal church, who had made extensive observations on publick characters. After going to hear him, perhaps at different times, while he was employed in the regular course of service in his own church, in the city of New-York, this clergyman noted in his journal, "that he thought Mr. Gano possessed the best pulpit talents of any man he had ever heard." This anecdote was received from the Rev. Dr. Bowen, of New-York, whose father was the clergyman referred to.—*Dr. Furman's Letter.*



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## XI

### ABBOTT'S CREEK

The section in which Gano labored as a missionary of the Charleston Particular or Regular (Calvinistic) Baptist Church, lying east of the Yadkin from Boone's Ford, and south through the Jersey Settlement, extended only a few miles to the east, certainly no further than the stream known as Abbott's Creek. Along that stream and to the east the first religious development was by another type of Baptists, the Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek. Both sections were in the Granville Tract, which was not open to settlement until after 1752; within the next four years the Baptists had already begun their work in both sections, the Particular (Regular) Baptists in the Jersey Settlement, and the Separate Baptists at Sandy Creek. So far as the records show in the early years the Baptists of the Jersey and the Abbott's Creek churches had no communication with one another. Of both some account has been given in the first volume of this work. Above a more particular account has been given of the further Baptist development in the Jersey Church region. A like account of the early work at Abbott's Creek follows.

It is definitely known that shortly after the arrival of the Separate Baptists at Sandy Creek in November 1755, and before the constitution of the Abbott's Creek Church, both Shubal Stearns and Daniel Marshall were preaching, making and baptizing converts in the Abbott's Creek sec-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

tion. One of these converts was Tidence Lane whose account of Stearns and of his own conversion is given in Volume I, p. 287. Another was James Billingley, probably the "young man who had a desire for good," found by Br. Soelle, living some miles to the east.<sup>1</sup> Though the homes of both were in the Abbott's Creek section both at baptism became members of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church and both are named by Morgan Edwards as the ministers, unordained, of the Sandy Creek Church in 1771-1772.<sup>2</sup>

Though the exact date of the constitution of the Baptist Church at Abbott's Creek is not known, it was doubtless from the beginning the place of meeting for those of that region baptized by Stearns, early in the year 1756, and since it was the first of the Separate Baptists churches, after Sandy Creek, in North Carolina, the date of its organization must have been earlier than October, 1757, when the next Separate Baptist church in the Province, Deep River in Chatham County, was organized. Very probably Abbott's Creek was organized late in 1756. Semple's account is:<sup>3</sup>

At Abbott's Creek, about thirty miles from Sandy Creek, the gospel prospered so largely, that they petitioned the mother church for a constitution, and for the ordination of Mr. Marshall as their pastor. The church was constituted; Mr. Marshall accepted the

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<sup>1</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 796.

<sup>2</sup> On his return from Virginia to Salem, October, 1772, Soelle found near the state line a neighborhood of which he says (*Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 802): "Most of the settlers hereabouts are religious, some Baptists, among them." One of these Baptists was Tidence Lane, with whom Soelle spent the night, and on his invitation preached in a meeting house near the home of Nicolas Perkins (Porkins). Soelle noted that Lane had formerly lived in the Abbott's Creek neighborhood and had been a member of the Church of England, but "as he found refreshment in the preaching of the Baptists he joined himself to them." Both Lane and Perkins had in all probability come to this section during the Regulator troubles eighteen months before, to escape from Governor Tryon and his troops. Shortly after this time, a small body of members of the Sandy Creek Church, in something like a church capacity, under the leadership of Lane, emigrated to the wilderness, and settled on Boon's Creek, Tennessee.

<sup>3</sup> *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 4 f. For convenience there is slight rearrangement of the quoted material.



call, and went to live among them. Marshall was indefatigable in his labors. He sallied out into the adjacent neighborhoods, and planted the Redeemer's standard in many of the strongholds of Satan.

Such is Semple's description of the character of Marshall's labors both before and after his ordination. Regrettably, Semple gives detailed account only of Marshall's work in Virginia. Speaking of his activities during his pastorate at Abbott's Creek he says: <sup>4</sup>

The gospel was carried by Mr. Marshall into the parts of Virginia adjacent to the residence of this religious colony soon after their first settlement. He baptized several persons in some of his first visits. Among them was Dutton Lane, who shortly after his baptism began to preach. A revival succeeded, and Mr. Marshall at one time baptized forty-two persons. In August, 1760, a church was constituted, and Mr. (Dutton) Lane became their pastor. This was the first Separate Baptist Church in Virginia. The church prospered very much under the ministry of Mr. Lane, aided by the occasional visits of Mr. Marshall and Mr. Stearns.

. . . Mr. Marshall's impressions led him to travel further south. Accordingly after prosecuting his successful ministry a few years in North Carolina, and the neighboring parts of Virginia, he took an affectionate leave of the church over which he presided, and of his friends in that region, and settled on Beaver Creek in South Carolina, not far from two hundred miles to the northwest of Charleston. . . . Mr. Marshall was accompanied by a few North Carolina Separates on his removal from them.

The above statements from Semple do not give the exact date of Marshall's departure with his followers from Abbott's Creek, but that it was in the year 1760 is well established by many well documented statements about Daniel Marshall in Miss Leah Townsend's *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, of which one, on page 159, reads:

After stopping for a time in North Carolina, where he co-operated with Rev. Shubal Stearns, Mr. Marshall removed with a group of his followers to Beaver Creek near Broad River in South Carolina

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<sup>4</sup> *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 5.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

in 1760, but remained there only to 1762, when he and his family went on to Stevens Creek.<sup>5</sup>

It admits of no doubt, then, that late in 1756 or early in 1757, the Separate Baptist church at Abbott's Creek was organized with Rev. Daniel Marshall as its pastor; that Mr. Marshall remained in this charge until some time in the year 1760, probably late in the year, when he left with some of the members of the church for Beaver Creek, South Carolina. We know from Semple that while Marshall was pastor of the church at Abbott's Creek he was very active, even more active than Stearns, going far and wide preaching and baptizing, but it is only of Marshall's activities in Virginia that Semple gives any definite account; neither Semple nor any other has left a line of historical record of Marshall's work as pastor of Abbott's Creek Church. The only reference of Baptist interest in Abbott's Creek during the time of Marshall's pastorate is an entry in the *Bethabara Diary*<sup>6</sup> for March, 1760, which reads: "March was a very trying month. On the 20th, word came that John Thomas, a Baptist minister had been killed between the Wach and the Ens, on the Road to Ebets (Abbott's) Creek; another of the party was missing, while the third escaped." If Thomas had come from the Kehukee region, as is prob-

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<sup>5</sup> Lack of a contemporary historian of their early history such as Virginia Baptists had in Semple, and failure to preserve their early church records, have cost dearly the Baptists of North Carolina and in particular those of the Abbott's Creek section, who know little or nothing about their early history. Rev. Henry Sheets, in his *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 82, professes entire ignorance as to "how Daniel Marshall first came to visit this place," Abbott's Creek. He "can only speculate . . . that in answer to solicitations from Mr. Younger he came and preached, and a great work of grace was the outcome, which resulted in his permanent connection with the work. He being a man of great energy pressed the work of organization, and was ordained pastor of the constituted church." How long he remained pastor is not known. We have only this record. There is a space of twenty years in the history of the church that is without a single line of record. If there was any kept of this time, it has been lost. After we lose sight of Daniel Marshall as pastor, the very first line of history begins: "North Carolina, Roan County, Janevary ye 4 day 1783. For the Baptis church in Abets Crick."

<sup>6</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 230.

able, the statement confirms the generally accepted view that by this time the work of Stearns and Marshall had excited much interest among the Baptists throughout North Carolina.

*The Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* show that at the time of the slaying of Thomas, March 1760, the Indians who had begun their incursions some months earlier were becoming even more active than before, and were terrorizing the settlers in all directions from Wachovia, on Abbott's Creek as well as on the Yadkin. Though the settlers, with the aid of the provincial government, adopted measures of defence, which in the end proved successful, the danger, though in diminishing degree, continued throughout 1760 and until a nominal peace was made with the Cherokees toward the end of the year 1761. During this period of danger religious activity in the Abbott's Creek section doubtless was suspended; there is no record of it, either in the Moravian records or elsewhere. It should be said, that there is no hint that the going of Marshall and a group of the members of the Abbott's Creek Church to South Carolina was in any way connected with the Indian war.

There were other reasons for Marshall's departure from this region, the chief being that at Abbott's Creek he found his activities somewhat circumscribed for a person of his pioneering disposition. To the east was Sandy Creek under the care of Shubal Stearns; to the north was Virginia where he had planted the work and trained workers; to the northwest was Wachovia, already doing a great work; along the Yadkin south of Wachovia as far as the Jersey Settlement the Regular Baptists under Gano had occupied the field. Marshall was looking for a place where the widest expansion was possible, and went first to Beavers Creek, South Carolina, then to Stevens Creek, and finally to Kioka, Georgia, and there ended his labors.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

After the departure of Marshall in 1760, we are not, as Sheets supposed, entirely without record of Baptist activity in the Abbott's Creek section until the reorganization of the Abbott's Creek Church on January 4, 1783. From the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* we learn that soon after the Indian invaders had withdrawn Separate Baptist preachers from other sections were visiting this section and preaching to interested congregations. A record for the year 1767 tells that Br. Utley had been doing a great deal of missionary work, one of the places where he preached being "Justice Sporgen's house on Abbott's Creek," and in that general direction several others—Christian Frey's house on South Fork, Robert Ellroth's house at Shallow Fords, Phelpp's house beyond Muddy Creek, all places at no great distance from Abbott's Creek, from which alone could have come the considerable religious interest Utley found there. Utley's preaching visits to them were arranged by those whom he visited. Frequently on Saturday a messenger would arrive from some of the adjacent settlements and would take Utley back to preach for them on the following Sunday. In the latter part of the year requests grew few, and Nov. 28th (1767) it is recorded that the reason for this was the activity of a certain Baptist or New Light preacher, who was preaching frequently in the neighborhood and had baptized a number of grown persons. The result of his instruction was considered doubtful, for "*the same thing had happened several times in the preceding years* (italics not in the original) with no lasting effect, for the preacher laid great stress on a better life, but not through the atonement of Jesus."<sup>7</sup> These "preceding years" were years earlier than 1767, when the record was made, and the records establish the fact that soon after the departure of Marshall from Abbott's Creek the members of that church still retained their religious

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<sup>7</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 352.



interest, and in their destitution were ministered unto by visiting Separate Baptist preachers doubtless including Joseph Murphy; when no minister of their own faith came, they invited the Moravian missionary.

The next important Baptist developments in this general region was the establishment of three branches of Mr. Murphy's church west of the Yadkin of which some account has already been given. Though records are wanting it is safe to say that throughout these years there was a normal increase in the Baptist population in the Abbott's Creek section, which now included the River Settlements. It was doubtlessly a predominantly Baptist community, and since it was such, it suffered severely in the Regulator War. Abbott's Creek lies on the line of march along which Governor Tryon led his army to Bethabara from Hillsboro by Sandy Creek to the Moravian settlement in May and June, 1771.

Evidence is not wanting that this harrying of the Baptists greatly interfered with the Baptist development in the Abbott's Creek section. More than a year later Tidence Lane and seemingly other Baptists from this section were found to have gone north to the border of Virginia, probably being among the numerous Baptists who, says Morgan Edwards, left the Province because of the Regulator War.

However, the work begun by Stearns and Marshall at Abbott's Creek had in it the elements of survival. It was not destroyed by the lack of a regular minister after the departure of Marshall in 1760, and the religious interest, the greater part of it among Baptists, continued there. In all this section where Marshall had preached, as far east as the Uwharrie and beyond in the new county of Guilford, which then included Randolph, in the years 1771-1773, the Moravian missionary Soelle found the people much interested in religion. "From the River Settlements Soelle crossed Abbotts Creek to the house of Leonard Kern, a

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

German, 'who holds services for the neighbors and catechises the children'." <sup>8</sup> The next night Soelle was at the home of Jacob Roth, "dear Jacob Roth," a Dunkard (German Baptist) whom Soelle often mentions as resident on Abbott's Creek. Like others in this section, Roth was "hungry for preaching" and he joined with "two Englishmen," seemingly settlers who spoke English, and probably Baptists, in requesting Soelle to return and preach for them, which Soelle agreed to do.

The next night Soelle spent at the home of Dewald Fant, four miles further east towards the Uwharrie. Whether Fant was a Baptist or not is not told, but probably he was since later there was a prominent Baptist family of that name. Here as at other places in this section Soelle found much religious interest; many of the neighbors gathered in, "asking innumerable questions." Of them Soelle said:

These people are of a definite species, and remind me of the crow in Aesop's Fable, which made itself great with the feathers of other birds. They have Moravian, Dunkard, Separatists, Baptist (probably Separate Baptist and Regular Baptist) principles, know everything and know nothing, hold to no one, and reject all others.

Fant's home was near the center of the Abbott's Creek section. The time was November, 1771. Two days later Soelle preached at John Kimborough's near the Uwharrie, the eastern limit of the Abbott's Creek section, where he found his hearers "of many religious beliefs, a bewildered people," but, as is indicated in the footnote, differing somewhat from those at the home of Fant.<sup>9</sup> Except those with

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<sup>8</sup> *Records or the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 795.

<sup>9</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 796. "On the following day services were held at the home of John Kimborough, the most important man in the neighborhood. He was quite young but the Assembly Man for Guilford County. Soelle preached here several times on various trips, and made interesting notes of his experiences. 'There was close attention, emotion and tears. People remarked that they had never seen so quiet a service. . . . Many Free Masons live in this section.' The service was attended by people of many religious beliefs, 'a bewildered people.' In April, 1772, Kim-

Moravian principles, who were doubtless very few in Abbott's Creek, Soelle mentions only Baptists and Dunkards (German Baptists) among those who so vigorously defended their principles in the gathering at Fant's, and it was doubtless Baptists who in 1771 composed the greater part of the religious population of the Abbott's Creek section. It was a Baptist minister named Martin, unknown otherwise, who had awakened a religious interest in the mind of John Kimborough.<sup>10</sup>

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borough as spokesman made Soelle a definite offer, urging him to become their pastor, but he was obliged to refuse."

<sup>10</sup> Soelle's statement in the portion of Soelle's diary translated for Miss Flossie Martin by Miss Fries but unpublished is: "This young man (John Kimborough), as he told me, was once impressed and convinced by Martin, a bishop of the Taufgesinnten (AnaBaptists) but he had lost it again, though he retains enough that he listens to the truth gladly." Bradley Kimborough, probably a relative of John, lived further west in the Abbott's Creek section. "He and his wife were elderly people, members of the Church of England, and 'hungry for the Gospel.' The neighbors say: 'We went go to his house, because he falls upon us with the Gospel.'" In March, 1773, Soelle preached the first sermon in a new meeting house near Bradley Kimborough's. This new meeting house was also only a half mile east of the home of Billingley toward Bradley Kimborough's, "a young man who had a desire for good," probably the Billingley named by Morgan Edwards as a licentiate of the Sandy Creek Church. According to Soelle, writing of this new meeting house, "most people about here are without God or God's Word." It was probably a community meeting house to meet the needs of the neighborhood. A Mr. Peace who had bought land nearby and was planning to move there, had given £5 (\$25.00) toward the meeting house. Soelle "notes that there are only three meeting houses between Salem and the Uwharrie," Friedland, Welborn's, and Kimborough's. Friedland is seven miles southeast of Salem; Welborn's seems to have been the name given the Abbott's Creek Baptist Church. Kimborough's was west of the Uwharrie, near the crossing. Soelle gives the names of some residents of the Abbott's Creek neighborhood—Kern, Fant, Jacob Roth, Jacob Wagner, Ulrich Richards, "Old Peter Kühn (Kean)," widow Parloer, "an elderly woman." Her husband, whose first name is not given, had died in 1771. Of Mr. Ross, Soelle gives the following account, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 798.: "On Abbott's Creek there was Mr. Ross, an elderly man, who 'asked whether what people said of me was true, that is, whether I was a Free Mason, which was the reason the Moravians did not love me.' I only laughed, and did not think the question worth an answer, for I am always comforted when what the people say of me is a plain lie." At Ross's home, Soelle notes that the breakfast consisted of fat meat and sauerkraut. On this first trip through the section, Soelle learned that he was disposed to judge these simple Christians too harshly. They were glad to have him preach for them. The day following the night they had asked him so many annoying questions at Fant's house, he held a public service of which he reports: "The hearts and ears of the people were open, and they melted like wax in the fire, especially dear Jacob Roth."

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In November, 1771, only five months after Tryon's military invasion of this section, Soelle seems to have found no preacher of the Baptist faith here. However, when he made his trips in February and April of 1772, the Baptists at Abbott's Creek already had a minister. The record is: "The Baptist preacher and teacher in this Abbott's Creek neighborhood was Stotsmann, 'an earnest, serious, loyal man'."<sup>11</sup> It is significant that Stotsmann was from Virginia and on that account free from persecution on a charge of being a Regulator. He was both a preacher and a teacher, and had probably been sent by the Virginia Baptists to relieve the destitution in the Abbott's Creek section which had existed since the departure of Rev. Daniel Marshall in 1760, and which had doubtless been more serious since the occupation of the region by the hostile forces of Governor Tryon. All that we know of Stotsmann is what is found in Soelle's *Diary*, which indicates that he was a man of good social qualities, which excited the admiration of Soelle, while his (Stotsmann's) ability in discussing religious questions seems to have surprised him. Mrs. Stotsmann, who took part in these discussions, showed the same qualities as her husband. Some further account of these matters is given in a footnote.<sup>12</sup> The Stotsmanns

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<sup>11</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 798. The account following is based on portions of Soelle's *Diary* translated for Miss Martin by Miss Fries.

<sup>12</sup> Stotsmann's wife was an able woman, possibly a teacher also. They had a family, some of the children being grown, whose religious training Soelle thought neglected. The exact location of the Stotsmann home is not indicated. Possibly he taught in several neighborhoods and had a home in each. In an account of a trip in this section, February 17, 1772, Soelle says: "I planned to visit with the teacher of the Taufgesinnten (Anabaptist) and others, but Mr. Stotzmann—that was the teacher's name—anticipated me, as he came to me in good time and stayed until afternoon. There was much to talk about, and to answer. He is an earnest and a serious young man, who means well, as far as he knows; you might say he is a young John who as yet lacks simplicity of faith in the heart of God, and is therefore ensnared in the works of the law which causes much darkness in his mind. In leaving he invited me to visit him in his house, that he might tell me more about his condition, and I promised to do so."

Two days later, February 19, 1772, Soelle says: "Visited Mr. Stotzman,



had several children, for whose support he had to provide chiefly by what he could make by teaching, for only a few weeks after Soelle's visit to the Stotsmann home he made the statement: "It is the custom and rule of the Baptists not to pay their preachers, and that they must support themselves by the work of their own hands, in spite of the

who received me in friendly fashion. I conversed with the man and his wife, who laid much stress on self-denial. I answered that self-denial is the fruit of faith as an apple of the tree, and cannot be produced until a man believes; that a great mistake in the present time is that men move too rapidly with an awakened soul, and while it still hangs in the balance, it is treated as believing, and this is the reason that many are counted living who are dead, and that they sink back into their former sleep. Let the tree be good, and the fruit would be good also. When I was leaving he asked me to come again, when I was in this neighborhood."

Of his last visit Br. Soelle gives the following account: "July 20 (1772). I visited Mr. Stotsmann. He and his wife were not at home, but I talked with his grown children, and felt sorry for the young people, who were as hard as stones because they have not been led to Jesus."

The above report by Br. Soelle of his discussion with Stotsmann, the Separate Baptist preacher, is valuable since it gives better than any other statement of the time the justification the Separate Baptists offered for the character of their work. Interesting also is the criticism of the work of the Separate Baptists by Soelle, a member of a historical church which put emphasis on instruction rather than regeneration. In their discussion with Soelle Stotsmann and his wife, we are told, laid much stress on self-denial, doubtless meaning abstinence from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, "change of life," which they considered the proper and sufficient evidence that the former sinner had become a child of God; there was no necessity that he should undergo a long period of probation and instruction before he was admitted to the fellowship of the saints. Only let him deny himself and take up his Cross and follow Jesus; this was the one thing needful. From the moment of his rebirth, the child of God was a Christian, should and could live as a Christian and be accepted as a Christian. It was this Gospel that Stearns and Marshall had preached in North Carolina, and Dutton Lane, Samuel Harris, and James Read had preached in Virginia, where Stotsmann and Mrs. Stotsmann and countless others had heard them and under their preaching had come to newness of life. In their enthusiasm men of little training in the schools were able to give a reason for their faith, as Soelle found on this occasion.

Those of other faiths, some of them able and devout ministers and preachers, like Br. Soelle, saw this great religious movement among the Baptists with mingled wonder and impatience. Soelle seemed to accept the statements of Stotsmann as a challenge, which he met with some display of learning and the virtual charge that the work of the Baptists was superficial and was filling the churches with the unsaved.

There is no doubt that the good missionary Soelle was much surprised and puzzled and somewhat disturbed and yet in many respects gratified as he realized the extent and character of the religious development brought about by the Baptists in the regions he visited in the years 1771-1773. On February 6, 1773, three months before his death, seemingly grudgingly and with some reluctance he wrote with reference to the Baptists generally,

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fact that they must visit and serve the people committed to their hands.”<sup>13</sup>

The records do not indicate whether or not the church at Abbott's Creek kept up its organization, but it seems certain that the members continued to assemble for worship, and probably as an ordained minister Stotsmann served them in the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. How long Stotsmann remained at Abbott's Creek is unknown. In less than two years this section, like most other sections of North Carolina, was in turmoil, and in three years came the Declaration of Independence and open war. In the early years of the war, the Abbott's Creek section was far removed from the scene of the actual fighting and the religious life was not much disturbed by it. As may be learned from the 1793 edition of Asplund's *Baptist Register*, the Sandy Creek Association continued to hold its sessions annually or semiannually. As already told in the first volume of this work, page 407 f., "The church of Abbott's Creek in Rowan County had been reconstituted in 1777 and was again a member of the Association with 80 members, under the care of Elder Pope."<sup>14</sup> According to Asplund, its members numbered 80 in 1790, 95 in 1791, 100 in 1792, and 105 in 1793.

No account has been found of the circumstances under which the reorganization took place, but that it was made in 1777 is established by the fact that it was the traditional date and is that given by Benedict,<sup>15</sup> writing in 1811. After

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"I cannot deny that there is some good in the Baptists, but there are too many who run about in their own spirit and do themselves and others harm. They are numerous in this neighborhood (perhaps on Hunting Creek) and preach industriously. If Christ is preached, even if they do not know Him themselves, I am content, but when the people are led to other things it makes me sorry." (From translation by Miss Adelaid Fries for Miss Flossie Martin.)

<sup>13</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 800.

<sup>14</sup> This Elder Pope was not the Thomas Pope of the Kehukee section, often mentioned in Volume I and of whom Morgan Edwards wrote two sketches, pp. 234, 239, and who died March 1, 1762.

<sup>15</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 527.

1777, however, until after the close of the war, conditions in no part of North Carolina were favorable for religious work, and it is not surprising that when the war had ended, the church at Abbott's Creek thought reorganization necessary; reorganization meant no more than that the members of the church assembled, signed their names in a new church record-book, beneath a confession of faith and covenant; elected new church officers, including deacons and minister; appointed days for church meetings and preaching services. These things the church at Abbott's Creek did on January 4, 1783, less than six years after the reorganization in 1777. They recorded their action in a book which has been preserved, and was used by Sheets in his account of the Abbott's Creek Church in his *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, pages 81-86, to which readers are referred. The first line of the record is: "North Carolina, Roan County, Jenevary ye 4 day, 1783. For the Baptis church in Abets Crick." The Confession of Faith which follows has been given in Volume I at page 403. Sheets continues: "Immediately following the above is, The members recorded by name—the pastor, George Pope."<sup>16</sup> Elder George Pope remained pastor until September, 1813, nearly thirty-one years, when he resigned and went to South Carolina. He was highly praised by the historian Benedict.<sup>17</sup>

Very early Baptist ministers were traveling and preaching in the section to the north of the Yadkin along the Virginia line and to the east on the Dan and Reed Fork and Haw rivers, but until well into the nineteenth century

<sup>16</sup> For a biographical sketch of Pope see Sheets, *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 40 f. Sheets does not give the number of members in 1783. In 1952 there were 361 members and 388 in Sunday school, and 147 in the W.M.U. The church had paid for pastor's salary and other church gifts \$8,282, for missions, \$2,548, and on a new building \$10,844.

<sup>17</sup> Leah Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists*, p. 100 n., says: "Tradition says that Rev. George Pope from North Carolina came in 1776 in response to a dream to found Flat Creek Church; from the records he was pastor later, dying in 1817; this church is still known as Flat Creek; it is 35 miles northeast of Camden."

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

little account is found of this work in Baptist records, and to many writers of Baptist history even the names of able and worthy Baptist preachers in this section in the years before Elias Dodson seem to be unknown. However, in the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, which may be easily consulted, there are numerous references to these men and their activities. It was in this work that was found the account of the presence in this section of Rev. Samuel Harris already given. The *Records* are also the source of much information used in previous chapters, and it is to them that we are indebted for the greater part of our somewhat detailed knowledge of Rev. William Hill and learn that as early as August 1775 he was well known as a Baptist minister and an active and trusted patriot in the struggle for Independence.<sup>18</sup>

It is known from Baptist records that Rev. William Hill continued active as a minister of the Gospel for many years, and in 1784 had a part in the organization of the new Jersey Baptist Church. Little is known of other Baptist preachers and their work in this section in the later years of the eighteenth and earlier years of the nineteenth centuries. Two of the Baptist ministers who at this time were doing great and highly successful work here were John Tatum and John Newman. Of John Tatum the Salem *Diary* for August 4, 1803, says:<sup>19</sup>

We heard of the decease yesterday of our friend John Tatum, a neighboring and blessed preacher of the Baptist persuasion. At the request of a number of his followers he bought a piece of land three to six miles from Bethabara in the year 1792, and this made him acquainted with the Brn. Marshall and Benzien. From them he learned that they, as he, had come as poor sinners to enjoy the grace of Jesus, and that in the Unity of Brethren, this was the greatest concern for us and for our children, and this led him soon into a hearty love for them. He considered the *Idea Fidei*

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<sup>18</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, pp. 845, 848, 881, 892, 907, 939; III, pp. 1049, 1096, 1139, 1184.

<sup>19</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2730.



*Fratrum* a priceless book, read and reread it, and spoke of it to those who came to his house. His preaching places, which were largely on the east side of Wachovia, he served in addition to carrying on his farm; and his warm testimony to free grace through the blood of Jesus was blessed to many inside and outside his flock. He particularly liked to visit the sick, as much as he could, and often had the pleasure of pointing to the Saviour, in their last need and anguish, even those who had led evil lives, and saw them pass away trusting in His merits. A few weeks ago he became ill with dysentery, and at once thought this would be the occasion of his home-going, and witnessed to everybody his thanks and joy in the lot of grace which he anticipated. To his last days he remembered his friends in Salem, and sent a hearty greeting to them. He was somewhat over sixty years old, was loved and respected in the whole neighborhood, and his home-going is a loss for many.

Of John Newman the following account is found in the *Salem Diary* for April 30, 1804:<sup>20</sup>

"This afternoon the Brn. Reichel and Benzien had a friendly visit from a Baptist preacher named Newman, a good friend of the Baptist preacher Tatum, already mentioned in our diary, who fell asleep in the Lord last year. This sixty-nine year old man, in spite of his age and his feeble health occasioned by a severe illness (concerning which he consulted our doctor) has continued to proclaim Jesus the Crucified, His merits, His blood and death, as the only ground of salvation, to many congregations of his denomination. . . . For some time now he has had the pleasure of perceiving in his neighborhood, some thirty miles from here, where formerly godlessness and sin abounded, more attention was being given to the Gospel, and to the power of God. He said he felt at one with all who love the Lord Jesus, whatever their denominational name, and interrupted his remarks to extend his hand in friendly fashion to the Brethren as a sign of unity in love of Jesus.

From the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* we learn that Tatum was widely known and much respected among his fellow Baptists, and particularly among preachers such as John Mond who died at the home of Br. Folz at Salem, and Newman. In the account above it is said that Tatum's preaching places were largely east of the

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<sup>20</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2765.

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Yadkin. In accord with this statement is Asplund's *Register* which shows that in 1790 John Tatum was pastor of Cross Roads Church in Guilford County. From other sources we learn that the deed for the lot on which this church was built was registered in Guilford County on September 4, 1784.<sup>21</sup> According to Asplund, the church in 1790 had only 20 members, and was in the Sandy Creek Association. In the same year, 1790, Asplund tells us that John Newman was pastor of Soapstone Creek Church in Stokes County, which had 170 members and belonged to the Strawberry District Association. In 1805, he was preaching in a district only thirty miles north of Salem.

Another Baptist preacher who labored in this section at this time and earlier in the time of Soelle, 1771-1773, was named Cox, of whom it is recorded in the *Salem Diary*, August 29, 1806,<sup>22</sup>

A Baptist preacher, named Cox, from Surry County, came to consult our doctor about his health. He had been in service for forty-seven years, was a special friend of the departed Baptist minister Tatum, and knew our departed Br. Soelle well.

<sup>21</sup> A manuscript statement about Rev. John Tatum's church, Cross Roads, Guilford County, on two small sheets, 6 x 9 inches, in the Baptist Collection, Wake Forest College Library, reads: "The old Baptist church at Hillsdale, Guilford County.—The first book was either destroyed by fire or lost.—The oldest record was in an old church record, Dated:—'The minutes of the Baptist Church of Christ at Haw River Cross Roads, in the county of Guilford commencing March A. D., 1822.'—This record continued till August meeting 1864.—The Deed made for the use of the church was made by Thomas Winchester to Hubbard Peeples and dated as follows: June 13th, 1784, and made to the regular Baptists and is registered in Guilford County, Book C., Sept. 4th, 1784.—The first house (supposed to be) was a log house with a pulpit on the north side—when more room was needed, additions were made at each end—the end logs being cut out—with door in the side of the old building and a door in each end. The old deed was given me by our dear old Elder Tatum to keep; it is all to pieces but I have pasted it up so I can read it. It was made by Thomas Winchester to Hubbard Peeples the father of our old brother Abraham Peeples—my dear Bro. Pinkney married his daughter.—He is now living in Inka Miss. Dates as follows 12th of June 1784—calls for the Regular Baptists. It is registered in Guilford county, Book C, September 4 1784. Nearly one hundred and fif(t)y years ago. Alexander Campbell Register page 88.—There was a log wall at first, afterwards an addition was made and each end was cut and additions to each end—a door in front end and one in each end."

<sup>22</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, VI, p. 2853.

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This statement indicates that Cox had begun his ministry soon after Shubal Stearns came to Sandy Creek, and that possibly he was a member of the well-known Cox family of Randolph County (now mostly Friends.) It is clear that he was in this section as early as the time of Soelle, 1771-1773.

From the above it is seen that about the year 1800 several Baptist ministers had for a considerable time been preaching effectually in the territory of the present Pilot Mountain, Dan Valley and Piedmont associations. The source, almost the sole source, of our information about them is the *Records of the Moravians*; little is known about the early Baptist laborers in this wide field where today Baptists are so numerous and progressive. It is a very important contribution that these records of the Moravians make to the Baptist history of the section; they rescue from oblivion the names of the early Baptist pioneers and give some indication of their activities and what is of more consequence, these records reveal unmistakably what judgment the leaders of the Moravian Brethren passed on their Baptist brethren in the ministry, who were less learned than they. That judgment is such as to give much satisfaction to Baptists; it reveals the ablest of the Brethren had high regard for Baptist preachers; they were much pleased that in what they regarded the most important doctrines the Baptists and they were in agreement, and they were highly appreciative of the fact that the Baptist preachers were going so far and winning so many, even those whose life had been wild and evil. Of their Baptist brethren they speak with uniform respect and good will.

## CARAWAY CREEK

To the east of the Abbott's Creek section is that which was first called Caraway Creek. It lies along the Uwharrie River and its tributary Caraway Creek in that part of the

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original Guilford County which in 1779 was cut off as Randolph County. The first Baptist church in this section was that known as Caraway Creek. Though its exact location is not known, it was doubtless near the stream of that name which flows into the Uwharrie from the east westward from Asheboro. It was one of the six branches of the church of Haw River, near the present town of Pittsboro, under charge of Rev. Elnathan Davis, of which Morgan Edwards' account has already been given.<sup>23</sup> Like the other branches of the Haw River Church, Caraway Creek already in 1771-1772 had a meeting house; John Robins and George Williams, both unordained, are named as assistant ministers.<sup>24</sup>

For more than one hundred years Baptists had to be content with the scant account of Morgan Edwards of the beginnings of Baptist development on Caraway Creek. Sheets, in his *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, published in 1907, at page 129 f. reports five entries in the Record Book of the Abbott's Creek Church, the first in 1784, and the last in March, 1809, which show that in that period Caraway Creek was a branch of the Abbott's Creek Church. The last entry is "Caraway meeting held every three months." Sheets adds: "This is the last account we have of this interesting point. Its location is not known, but a Caraway Creek (stream) in Southwest of Randolph County leads to the belief that it was in that section."

However, today we have a more circumstantial account of the early Baptist development in the Caraway Creek section than in any other North Carolina field west of Sandy Creek where Stearns and Marshall and Elnathan Davis labored. This account is found in the *Diary* of the Mora-

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<sup>23</sup> Vol. I, p. 230f.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan Edwards in his "Materials," *North Carolina Historical Review*, VII, p. 389, indicates the location of Caraway Creek Church as in "Guilford County," which led to our statement: "The church at Caraway Creek soon became extinct." As will be seen below, it had some further history.



vian missionary, Br. Soelle, for the years 1771-1773, extracts from which, with explanatory notes, edited by Miss Fries, are found in Volume II of the *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, published in 1925. On all his missionary trips east of the Yadkin in 1771, 1772, and 1773, Soelle found the Caraway Creek preachers active along the Uwharrie as far north as John Kimborough's, whose home was on or near the crossing on the main highway leading east from Abbott's Creek. In the neighborhood was the home of Joseph Robbins, "whose house was a meeting place for the Baptists." Not improbably, he, Joseph Robbins, was a near relative of John Robins, named by Morgan Edwards as one of the assistant ministers in charge of the Caraway Creek Church, which at this time had a meeting house of its own. Evidently, in the months following the Regulator War, the Baptist work on Caraway Creek was growing. At the house of Joseph Robbins Soelle met Rev. Elnathan Davis, minister of the mother church at Haw River, possibly present at this time for the organization of another branch of the Caraway Creek Church, and to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, of which Soelle makes mention. A digest of Soelle's full account is given in the footnote.<sup>25</sup> It is to be observed

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<sup>25</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 797 ff. "Joseph Robbins house was a meeting place for the Baptists, of whom there were only about ten in the neighborhood. There Soelle met the Baptist minister, Davis, who cordially invited him to come to Haw River. Soelle spoke in the morning to about 200 persons, and the Baptist minister in the afternoon. Davis was the only ordained man among these Baptists, and Soelle thought him 'an earnest, well-meaning man, which with all his might pointed the people to the atoning power of Christ, assuring them that it mattered little whether they belonged to one or the other denomination, whether they were plunged, dipped or sprinkled, for the blood of Christ must be their righteousness, and it must be sprinkled in their hearts, otherwise nothing would help.' 'In the evening I had to answer many questions, especially with regard to Infant Baptism, and the Saviour gave me grace to answer all modestly, and to show them where I thought their mistake was; the minister himself kept very quiet. There are souls here that one can love, and that are tender, but others that are empty vessels, and it is the latter that do most of the chattering. I went to bed, but the others sat around until day, talking with each other.' 'The next day there was a baptizing; not so many came as yes-

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that although Soelle had been invited to talk, he was not invited to partake of the Communion with the Baptists, nor to have any part in the service. The *Salem Diary* for May 6, 1772, referring to these events says:

Br. Soelle has reported concerning his trip to the Hugh Warren (the Uharie) as follows—He had been there from April 3rd to 8th, and had preached to the Baptists, had heard their minister, Mr. (Elnathan) Davis, preach, and had attended the baptism of four adults.<sup>26</sup>

At this time, April 3, 4, 5, 1772, the Baptists had special services, preaching, baptisms, the Lord's Supper. Both Davis and Soelle preached. Without doubt, being the only ordained Baptist minister present, Davis officiated at the baptisms and the Lord's Supper, all in strict conformity with Baptist practice.

Thereafter Soelle was frequently on the Uwharrie and Caraway Creek, where he found a great deal of religious interest, some of it among the Germans, a prominent family

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terday.' Soelle saw four persons baptized, and remarks that the service 'charmed' him 'with its accordance with the words of Romans VI:4, 'Now are we also buried,' and if they had had on white garments, it would have made a pretty picture. Soelle did not feel moved to talk, but was especially invited to do so after the baptismal service, and made a short address on Matthew XI: 25-28. Then the Baptists had Communion, being ten in number, including the newly baptized."

Soelle adds the story of the drunken man, which is referred to in the *Salem Diary*, *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 680: "Before the first meeting began I was standing in the doorway talking to a man (a Baptist), when a young man came up who had been drinking. He said that we should make him repentant, for he was drunk and had industriously made himself so. I did not answer him, but the other man told him that if he had come to disturb the house of God, then the hand of the Lord would be laid heavily upon him. A moment later such an attack of colic came upon him that his drunkenness passed away, and he had to be carried to bed, where he lay all day in great pain."

<sup>26</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 680. The *Diary* continues: "Br. Soelle also preached the Gospel to a large English congregation in Mr. Kimborough's house; they offered to elect him their pastor, and to give him \$100.00, asking him to try them for a year, but he declared to them that he was a free servant of Christ, and might no longer tie himself to one congregation. On Good Friday, Br. Soelle was in Friedland, and held service for the company there; then he visited Ulrich Richards on his way to the Hugh Warren, where he preached in English and in German on Easter Day."

of whom were the Briels (Bryels) whose home was on Caraway Creek, probably ten to fifteen miles southeast of the home of John Kimborough, and "thirty miles in a straight line" from Salem. It was here that on an early trip Soelle preached in German to a largely attended meeting. But though Soelle gives no names he leaves no doubt that in his several visits in 1772-1773, he found the chief religious interest and activity among the English-speaking Baptists. On April 12, 1773, he wrote: "Most of the English on the Caraway are Baptists." In fact, it was the Baptists alone in these years that provided for the regular preaching of the Gospel in this section, and as indicated in Soelle's *Diary*, people were coming from great distances to hear the preachers.

On all but one of his visits to Caraway Creek Soelle went eastward by Abbott's Creek to the Uwharrie and then southward to Caraway. In the latter part of August, 1772, he reached Caraway after a longer trip.<sup>27</sup> Seemingly carrying out a purpose he had as he was leaving Salem nine days before, on August 24th he started on a visit to Rev. Drury Sims, the Separate Baptist preacher in charge of

<sup>27</sup> On August 15, 1772, he first went to Belews Creek and held services, first in German and then in English, at the home of a man named Seeler. He spent the night at the home of Rudolph Andreas who lived on the road to Alamance, probably near Kernersville. "The next evening he reached the so-called Buffalo Settlement." (Now near the city of Greensboro.) "All the residents here were Presbyterians, rich and well satisfied with themselves." Here he spent the night with a man named Care and on his request told him of the doctrines of the Moravian Brethren. The next morning, having recovered his horse which had wandered away during the night, he proceeded on his way, and spent several days in the German settlements extending southward from the Alamance section, near the battlefield of the recent battle, to Stinking Quarter near the southeastern corner of the present county of Guilford. In his account, Soelle says: "The settlers in Alamance and Stinking Water (Quarter) are nearly all German. They have four churches, one in Alamance and three in Stinking Water; the newest is large, and has a pulpit and galleries. Sutor preaches in all of them, and Nott (the teacher) is the reader when there is no 'preaching'." Sutor was a Swiss, "unlettered and unordained," and "from my heart I pitied the poor people, who spend their money where there is nothing to buy." This estimate is in accord with that of Caruthers, found in Volume I, p. 258, of this work. The only Baptist Soelle found in this section was a Dunkard, who boldly challenged Soelle to defend Infant Baptism.

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the church at Rocky River, three miles north of the present town of Siler City. Of this visit some account has been given. In 1771, Rocky River, like Caraway Creek, was a branch church of the Haw River Church of which Rev. Elnathan Davis was pastor. Communication of these churches with one another was made easier by a "big road," which in those early days already extended from Pittsboro westward as far as Caraway Creek, and probably to Salisbury, along or near the line of what was later a part of the "Old Stage Road" from Goldsboro to Salisbury. Two miles to the north of this road was, and is today, the Rocky River Baptist Church, and to this road Seiler conducted Soelle on the morning of the day Soelle had preached in the houses of both Seiler and Sims.

On August 30, 1772, on his return to Caraway Creek and as he was making his way homeward, Soelle found that a muster was being held at the house of John Kimborough, who asked Soelle to preach. Already a Baptist had an appointment to preach nearby, but his congregation left him to hear Soelle, and when Soelle had ended his sermon, the Baptist preacher followed him, but as he had a stammering tongue most of his hearers either would not listen or made fun of him, and he was not given a respectful hearing. Soelle speaks of his sermon, saying: "He spoke truth but mixed up and not well arranged." His name is not given. When Soelle was again at Kimborough's in October, 1772, "a Baptist preacher came and wanted to discuss infant Baptism" with him, but Soelle, who had previously been called upon to argue it, told him that "it was useless, for the matter had been discussed for many years without result except anger."

With such valiant defenders of the Baptist doctrines as Soelle found here, it is not surprising that after his last visit to this section on April 12, 1773, he wrote: "Most of the English on the Caraway are Baptists." After this time



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there is no record of Baptist preachers, educated or uneducated, in this section for many years. Until well into the present century all this section of Randolph County, lacking Baptist preachers, was almost without Baptist churches. Today, however, with Baptist preachers again active in the region, the Baptists have had a phenomenal increase in Randolph County.





## XII

### ORGANIZATION OF CHURCHES

The plan of organization of the early churches of the Yadkin Association was much the same as that of churches of the other associations in the state at that time, and since. This plan is set forth at some length in Burkitt and Read's *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*<sup>1</sup> substantially as follows. A church once established often found that as a result of a revival or the gathering in of settlers of the Baptist faith it had a group of members in a neighborhood so far from its regular place of meeting that it was inconvenient for them to attend the regular services of the parent church. To supply the needs of these it was customary to constitute them into an arm, or branch, of the church, which was ministered to by the pastor of the parent church, who preached for them at regularly appointed times, baptized their new members and administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, functions which only a regularly ordained minister had the right to perform. When such an arm of a church had a sufficient number of members to carry on church discipline and was able to provide itself with an ordained minister of its own, it was adjudged ready for constitution as an independent church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pp. 174ff.

<sup>2</sup> At its constitution in October, 1772, the Dutchman's Creek Church had ten members; Eaton's Church, 1790, had seventeen members. Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, p. 177f., indicates that there was some argument about the matter, some contending

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When such a group regarded themselves ready for constitution they made a petition to the parent church, asking for letters of dismission for each of them for the purpose of forming an independent church. This petition being granted, the dismissed members met at their usual place of meeting on the appointed day, which was often a day of fasting, all of them with their letters of dismission. Ministers, two or more, who had been appointed for the purpose, were also present and in charge of the proceedings. The further procedure, as told by Burkitt and Read, was as follows:

The ministers inquire whether it is their *desire* to become a church, whether their *habitations* are near enough to each other, conveniently to attend church conferences? Whether they are so well acquainted with each other's life and conversation to coalesce into one body, and walk together in love and fellowship? Whether it is their intention to *keep up a regular discipline* agreeably to the Scriptures, to make *God's word* the rule of their conduct in church government, obeying his ordinances, and in matters of faith, and all other things relative thereto in a church relation, and by these things distinguish themselves as a true church of Christ? These things being answered in the affirmative, then a covenant is produced, . . . and being read, consented to and subscribed, the ministers pronounce them a church in some such words as these: "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of our office, we pronounce you, (mentioning their names) a true *Gospel church*; endowed with all necessary power towards becoming a complete organized body, and the due government of yourselves; and therefore stand bound to make proper use of that power, as ye shall answer it to the Head of the church, on whose name let us further call." Then they pray to God for a blessing on them, and conclude by singing his praise, and giving each other the right hand of fellowship. The church thus constituted have full power to choose their *officers*, receive members, and deal with offenders.

The principal officers were ministers and deacons, and in some of the early churches of the Yadkin Association,

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that there should be thirteen, the number at the institution of the Lord's Supper, while others said seven or some other number. But as the Scriptures left the number indefinite the Baptists had no fixed rule.

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ruling elders. Sometimes the minister chosen for the newly constituted church was the minister of the parent church; in such case there is no record that a new ordination was thought necessary; but when a new pastor was chosen it was necessary that he be ordained by a presbytery of at least two ordained ministers, who examined the minister-elect on his doctrinal views, and if they approved them, ordained him by the laying on of hands and prayer.<sup>3</sup> In most cases the pastor was expected to become a member of the church which he served; but in several instances he was a loan, obtained by formal petition, from some other church.<sup>4</sup> So long as an elder was a member of a church, his services as a minister were under the charge of that church, but when he had been regularly established as a minister of another church he usually got a letter of dismission from the home church and joined the church of which he was pastor.

In the early years the minister was pastor of only one church and its branches, and occasionally the pastorate was from his assumption of it until his death. Such was the case of the church of the Forks of the Yadkin, which Elder Benjamin Buckner served as pastor for the years 1793-1815, and Elder Joseph Pickler, 1815-1840. But pastorates of this nature were rare. Most of them were much shorter, five to ten years, and before the year 1800 some churches were changing pastors every year and the ministers took the liberty of accepting such calls as they would.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> For a detailed statement on ordination see Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, pp. 81 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Minutes of Dutchman's Creek Church for May 8, 1778; Minutes of Cove Creek Church for November, 1814: "The Church made a request of the Globe Church to let them have the services of Elder James Chambers as often as they could send him"; April, 1820: "The church agreed to petition the Sinking Creek Church in Carter County, Tenn., for her to send or give up Brother Jonathan Buck to come and attend us." In September, 1833, the Cove Creek Church voted to lend Elder B. McBride for one year, and to lend him for another year in June, 1834. For similar requests see Minutes of Flat Rock Church for June 18, 1791; March 25, 1805.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, the Lewis Fork Church in Wilkes County elected the fol-



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These early churches to the west of the Yadkin and in the upper Yadkin valley often lost their pastors by their emigration, as the Flat Rock Church lost William Petty in 1800, and Eaton's Church lost Rev. Lazarus Whitehead in 1805. As in these instances, it was often the ablest and most enterprising men who felt the urge to move west, but others went also, and the churches of this section found great difficulty in finding pastors, and some went for years without one except as they called in some elder who was serving another church to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, or to help ordain deacons.

In many of the early Baptist churches there were often one or more men, both young and mature, who had the "gift of prophecy," and were known as "Gifts." They were pious and devout and could talk in meeting and lead in prayer. Few of them, however, had had any educational advantages, and perhaps the greater number could barely read the Scriptures and were naturally dull, and on every account, except zeal, unfit for the pastoral function.<sup>6</sup> In some of churches of this section, however, there were young men of much natural intellectual ability, and of families respected by their neighbors for their industry and correct lives. Probably they had been taught reading, writing and

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lowing pastors after its organization in May, 1794; Elders George McNeill, James Chambers (1795), James McCaleb (1796). See address by W. H. Eller, *Rev. George McNeill, Centennial Memorial*, June 7, 1905, pp. 10ff.

<sup>6</sup>How poor were the educational provisions of that day in the region to the west of the Yadkin, and in most of the state, is indicated in a sketch, by himself, of Elder W. M. Lea, found in Borum's *Tennessee Baptist Ministers*, page 439. In 1824, his father, Elder John Lea, one of the strong family of Leas of Caswell County, had settled in Iredell County near the Hope Baptist Church. Here he remained for eleven years, and was recognized as one of the abler ministers of the Yadkin Association, but he was content to let his son grow up without schooling, and seemingly took no trouble to educate him in his home. When he moved to Tennessee in 1835 the son was unable to read and so continued until his conversion in 1847, when he was more than twenty years old. Feeling called to preach he set about getting what education he could to prepare himself for the sacred office. It took him twelve years to reach the junior class in Union University, Jackson, Tennessee. Later he was chaplain in the Confederate States Army, and President of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

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arithmetic in the elementary subscription schools of the day which were kept a few months in the year in at least a few communities.<sup>7</sup> Anything more than this they had got for themselves, mostly out of the family Bible and Blum's Almanac and the few text books, such as Murray's English readers, and hymn books. Only rarely did a family have such a repertoire of reading matter, but the young man with an eager desire for an education read all that he could beg or borrow, and understood as much of it as he could. For his other instruction he had the gossip of the neighborhood, which, though often unjust, taught him much of human nature. He also profited by the clashes of wits with his fellows and the stories of travelers and those who had carried their produce to distant markets, or had gone as messengers to neighboring Baptist associations. He visited annual fairs and was instructed in political matters by the heated discussions of candidates for office which he would go miles to hear; he knew wild life and the lore of rivers, woods and mountains; and more than he suspected the sermons he heard in the churches not only helped to form his religious life and faith but also trained him in logical thinking. Such a young man, often with a touch of family pride, naturally aspired for leadership, and this he often attained among the young people of his community as he grew up to manhood. In some instances he was already planning for an important place in the political life of his country, but being converted when he was about twenty years of age, in the enthusiasm of his new experience he began to speak in the meetings of his church and to make exhortations in protracted meetings, a common practice in those days, and to lead in prayer when called upon. From the first he had many words of encouragement, not

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<sup>7</sup> Mention is made of such schools in the earlier church record books. In the occasional lack of a meeting house the school houses were used for preaching places.

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only from kind-hearted old ladies, but also from the pastor and the more judicious members of the church, who knew how much the churches were in need of ministers; he had "gifts" and often some abler member in church meeting would surprise him by a motion to give him liberty to exercise them, at first perhaps only in the meetings of the church or by appointment at a school house in the neighborhood, and later, if he showed promise, "wherever God in his providence might call him." At times, however, full liberty to preach was given in the first motion.<sup>8</sup> Happy was that church which had one or more young men of such promise among its Gifts. The church did not wait long to ordain a young man of such character, especially if their pastor was feeble and growing old.<sup>9</sup>

Here a word needs to be said about the pastors of the churches in the area of the Yadkin Association in this early period.

The young men being licensed to preach and ordained often had a due sense of the responsibilities of the profession and in many cases were not without high aspiration. Although there were no schools above the elementary grades, the young minister often instituted a course of study for

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<sup>8</sup> Elder W. T. Brooks tells how when he was a student of Wake Forest Institute, the ardent Professor John Armstrong, without giving him any previous warning, at a meeting of the Wake Forest Church on November 30, 1836, after stating the great need of ministers in the denomination, introduced a resolution, "That in our estimation our Brethren Henry L. Graves and Wm. T. Brooks are called of God to preach the gospel of Christ, and it is the duty of this church to authorize them to preach the gospel wherever they may be called; and that the Pastor be authorized to furnish them with an instrument of writing signed by him and the Clerk which shall be considered a Licence." The motion was adopted.

In August, 1809, the Flat Rock church received by experience and baptism William Britton, a young man of much promise. At the next meeting, September, "on Motion, it was unanimously agreed that Brother Britton should be tolerated to go on in the exercise of his gifts as a preacher at any time or place where it may please God to call him."

<sup>9</sup> The Flat Rock Church received William Britton into its fellowship by experience and baptism in August, 1809, licensed him in September, and ordained him in December, and he immediately became an assistant to the pastor, the aged Wm. Cook, and on Cook's death, March 12, 1812, succeeded him as pastor.

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himself, to add to the general education spoken of above. With only the Bible for a textbook he sought to become a workman of whom his church would not be ashamed. In this purpose he was stimulated by what he saw and heard at the meetings of the association; in them the leadership was exercised by the abler and better educated ministers. It was they who were chosen as moderators, served on important committees, and were appointed messengers to other associations, and who could speak clearly and convincingly on the questions that came before the meeting. Making the most of their opportunities these ministers often became fairly well educated men. They could analyze the subject suggested by a text, speak clearly and preach powerfully. They knew men and the approaches to the human heart. They could do more than preach; they could argue a point against an able antagonist; they could deliberate calmly with their brethren and solve numerous problems affecting the social and spiritual welfare of the members of the church. With schools few and of low grade, naturally it was difficult for many churches in places remote from the towns, in the mountain coves and valleys, to find suitable men for the high office of pastor, and the same was true of many churches in the piedmont section and all parts of the State. For instance, the strong Flat Rock Church was without the care of a minister from September, 1800, when its able pastor, William Petty, resigned, until October, 1805, when it called Elder William Cook, who had been often in trouble with the Bear Creek Church because of "drinking spirituous liquors to excess," but an able preacher. In the meantime, several of the Gifts of the church were aspiring to ordination, but after consideration the church, in October, 1804, following a report of a committee, "thought there was not any ripe for ordination." The Record Book of the Cove Creek Church reveals the reluctance of that church to ordain any but a fit man for its pastorate, although for



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half the time from its organization until 1830 it was without pastoral care.

On the other hand, although unlettered, there were not a few men of marked ability in the churches of this section. They were good, substantial citizens and made their living on their farms. They were of respectable families and their lives were fashioned by those social graces and amenities which obtain in many rural districts as well as in what is known as good society. In any public assembly they were at home, having been schooled in regular rules of decorum generally observed in Baptist associations and other meetings. Such men were William Petty, John Angel, John Barlow, Lazarus Whitehead, William Britton, George McNeill, Brumley Coker, Richard Cunningham, Barton Roby. Of several of them, such as Lazarus Whitehead, Joseph Murphy, and John Tatum, the Moravian ministers spoke in terms of high appreciation.<sup>10</sup> On those rare occasions when they felt called to take part in political affairs, the Baptist preachers of this period surprised the complacent politicians with their ability and resourcefulness in argument. In Volume I of this work we have seen that Elder Henry Abbott of the Shiloh Church was the sponsor of the article on religious liberty in the Bill of Rights and the main body of the State Constitution of 1776. It seems to have been owing to Abbott and other Baptists that in this same State Convention, the right of Baptists and other non-Conformist ministers to perform the marriage ceremony was recognized. It was largely owing to William Lancaster and Lemuel Burkitt and their fellow Baptists that the Convention of 1788 did not adopt the national Constitution since it had no guarantees of that same religious liberty. It should be added that those who sought to prevent their election to a place in that Convention had learned something

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<sup>10</sup> *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 786; IV, pp. 1682, 1824; VI, pp. 2625, 2655, etc.

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of their power in debate on the questions.<sup>11</sup> The preachers just spoken of were in eastern North Carolina, but as early as 1770 Rev. Joseph Murphy had taught Rev. T. S. Drage, the minister appointed by Tryon for St. Luke's Parish, Salisbury, to respect his power and influence.<sup>12</sup>

A view that long prevailed in many Baptist churches on the support of ministers is here indicated. Since their minister was one whom they had ordained from their own number, the church felt no obligation to pay him anything for his services. Like the deacons he performed the duties of his office, and like them he expected no compensation. He usually had a farm and was able to make a living for himself and family as any other member. On this account he enjoyed a measure of independence for which he could thank God. It was almost a creed in some churches that while the minister preached on Sunday, yet Sunday was the Lord's Day, and why should he be paid for what he did on a day on which he owed his services to the Lord? The members also had their duties on Sunday, one of which was losing as much time as the preacher to be at the church and sit and listen to his sermon. If the pastor attended the church meetings on Saturdays, so did the members. Sometimes, it is true, he served other churches also and it was necessary for him to furnish his own conveyance to reach them, but on these trips he was well cared for; some brother furnished bed and meals, and his horse was stabled and fed, although it was observed that a preacher seldom rode a fat horse, and the horse was usually ravenous when he got back

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<sup>11</sup> Elkanah Watson, *Men and Times of the Revolution*, pp. 262-264, quoted in a sketch of Burkitt by T. M. Pittman in the *Wake Forest Student*, XXV, p. 48ff.

<sup>12</sup> In a letter to Governor Tryon, *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, VIII, p. 203, Rev. T. S. Drage, the newly appointed minister of the Church of England for St. Luke's Parish, Salisbury, in describing the meeting of the Dissenters to prevent the formation of a vestry says: "The Separate Baptists joined them. Murphy, who talks away, seducing the people even in direct opposition to the Dissenter principles, was received into the Court-House as in communion with them and great countenance was given him."

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to his own trough.<sup>13</sup> The view of paying pastors here indicated is still religiously adhered to by the Primitive Baptists, who, however, are careful to say that "the lay members do sometimes give to the ministers; but it is done in such a way as to prevent any show or display."<sup>14</sup> Most churches, however, in this section were better in this matter of pastoral support than the well argued creed given above which was often heard as late as a half-century ago. The minutes of the early churches in this section furnish sufficient evidence that their members did recognize the obligation to contribute something to recompense the minister for his faithful services. On July 3, 1778, Dutchman's Creek asked the deacons to raise a bounty for their minister, Elder William Cook, by the next meeting. In September, 1787, the Flat Rock Church entered into an agreement to furnish their pastor, Elder William Petty, "a great-coat and other necessary clothing," and had raised and paid the money by the December meeting. In November, 1789, the church "unanimously agreed that each male member should contribute something toward paying Brother Petty's Tax." The minutes for September, 1792, provide that each member should bring yearly into the church "some such donations of corn and wheat as they can best spare, the stocks to be deposited in the hands of the deacons." The minutes for May, 1795, show that "the members of the Church, taking into consideration the travels and fatigues of our minister, have agreed to the following donation"—the amounts given being stated in English money, pounds, shillings and pence, which

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<sup>13</sup> The writer has heard a preacher explain the leanness of his faithful dobbin by saying that the brethren fed him lightly.

<sup>14</sup> Ashburn, *Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association*, pp. 152-153, where a blunt statement is made of the present Primitive Baptist practice in support of the ministry. In 1788, the Kehukee Association answered the question, "What way is thought best for a church to act in supporting their minister?" thus, "That each member ought to contribute voluntarily, according to his or her ability; in no wise by taxation or any other compulsion." Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, p. 70 f.

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all told at the current rate of exchange amounted to about fifty dollars. William McBryde, evidently a shoemaker, paid in shoes; another paid in corn; the largest gifts in cash, of which there were four, were for one pound each. Later ministers were paid less. Elder William Cook, in 1807, and Elder William Britton, in 1817, received an annual stipend of ten or twelve dollars. The minutes of other churches, such as Eaton's, show that after 1820 they paid their pastors twenty-five to fifty dollars a year; by serving several churches possibly he received as much as one hundred dollars a year from them all; many received far less. The smaller and weaker churches in the mountains gave less because the members had little or nothing to give. They were far from market and could sell their produce only for barter. But even the members of such churches gave something, each according to his ability. Not having money they used the expedient which the stronger churches to the east also used at times, which was to give in kind. Thus the Cove Creek Church, in the present county of Watauga, in January, 1801, appointed "the store of John Vanderpool as a depository for gifts to the church of corn or skins or beeswax, etc." Such gifts were carried to market by the merchant and sold for cash which was used for the church expenses of all kinds, including something for their preachers.<sup>15</sup> How little cash these members had is indicated by the small amount of the annual collections as late as the 1830's. In November-December, 1817, twenty members gave in cash \$3.81, the largest contribution, by Rhoda Reese, was 75 cents, followed by Christene Reese with 62½ cents, the Reese family giving considerably more than half the total amount. In later years the cash contributions were smaller—in 1832, \$1.96½; in 1835, \$2.87½; slightly more

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<sup>15</sup> See also the Minutes of the Cove Creek Church for May, 1815; and of Flat Rock, July, 1886.



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in 1834, "4D 30 cts."<sup>16</sup> How much of these small collections went to the minister is uncertain. Some was sent to the association to pay for the minutes; a part went regularly to pay for the elements of the Lord's Supper, yet the annual reports of the treasurer of the Cove Creek Church always showed a favorable balance, the highest being \$6.32½ in June, 1832.

It is evident that with the inability of the people of these churches to make large contributions, their pastors had to look to their own industry for their support.<sup>17</sup> This they did without complaint. And the Baptists of North Carolina have them to thank that they did so, since for many years it was the only condition on which the Baptist churches in the mountains and most other rural sections of the State could have functioned. On the other hand, there is no doubt that many churches that were financially able in all sections of the State did not give their ministers adequate support. As early as 1791, Elder Martin Ross, in a circular letter found in the minutes of the Kehukee Association for that year, pointed out the disastrous results of lack of liberality. As he neared the close of his letter in which he had ordered his arguments for proper ministerial support in a powerful way, he said:

By this sad neglect the poor ministers of the gospel are necessarily obliged to follow their worldly avocations for the support of themselves and their families, which prevents them from reading the Holy Scriptures, meditating, preaching constantly and giving

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<sup>16</sup> In these early minutes the dollar mark had not yet developed into its present fixed character.

<sup>17</sup> This was a fact observed by Rev. George Soelle, missionary of the Moravians. On his visit, by invitation, to Elder Drury Sims, pastor of the Rocky River Baptist Church of Chatham County, in August, 1772, he was made heartily welcome, but he remarks: "He is a very poor man, for it is the custom and rule of the Baptists not to pay their preachers, and they must support themselves by the work of their own hands, in spite of the fact that they must visit and serve the people committed to their charge. Some of the members do not approve of this." *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, II, p. 800.

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themselves wholly to the work—which weakens their hands, dulls their ideas, cools their zeal, and of necessity they are not so profitable to the churches, nor to the cause of Christ in general.

As we shall see, in 1829 the Big Ivy Association adopted Articles of Faith which included the statement:

We believe it is the duty of all church members to contribute to the support of the gospel and defray all reasonable expenses of the church, . . . according to their several abilities.

Although an awareness of the problem existed, there seemed to be little or no improvement. Even after the organization of the Baptist State Convention, when the Baptists had begun co-operating in and contributing to state-wide enterprises such as the founding of Wake Forest College for the education of the ministry, William Hooper was saying in the 1835 circular letter of the Sandy Creek Association:

There is one evil arising from this spirit of covetousness, which has long prevailed to the serious detriment of our Churches, and of which it is high time to complain. This is the refusal of our people to give their Ministers any adequate support. . . . Ministers have a right to support from the people for whose souls they labour, and . . . those people commit a sin who refuse him a reasonable support. . . . How many neighborhoods might have the gospel ministered to them regularly every Sabbath day, by faithful servants of God, if each man would do his duty in contributing his just portion to maintain his pastor. . . . As things now go on, how can a Minister “give himself to reading,” when the necessities of his family take up his whole time, or if he has a little time, he has no books. We hope, brethren, you will take this exhortation in good part, and seriously consider whether the curse of God is not blighting our churches for their ill judged and unscriptural conduct in refusing Ministerial support. . . . If your parsimonious disposition makes us willing to go without a pastor’s care, or to have preaching very seldom, we shall pay the penalty of our avarice by the leanness and barrenness of our souls.

So much for the office of pastor. We next consider that of deacon. The deacons were chosen regularly when the

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churches were constituted and ordained at the same time along with the pastors, the manner of ordination being the same in both cases. The normal number was two and they held office until death or resignation or giving up their membership. In an instance or two an elected deacon asked to be excused from serving on the ground that he was unworthy. Rarely a deacon resigned. Their functions were the same as in all other Baptist churches.<sup>18</sup>

In the early years, nearly all the churches had another office held by laymen, that of ruling elder. They were regularly ordained just as pastors and deacons. Their duties were not defined, but they seemed to act as the responsible representative of the church when it was without a pastor. Some churches, such as Dutchman's Creek, first elected a ruling elder when it had been for some years unable to secure a minister. The ruling elder could not administer the ordinances nor perform marriages. As the New Testament says nothing about the duties of the office it gradually fell into disuse.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the ordained officers a church, on its constitution, elects one of its members, usually one of the ablest and best educated, church clerk. His function is to keep the records of the church and lists of members in a record book specially provided for the purpose.<sup>20</sup> Many of the clerks were very able men and kept neat, easily legi-

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<sup>18</sup> For their ordination, see Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, p. 182 f.

<sup>19</sup> See Minutes of the Dutchman's Creek Church for July 23, 1782; Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, p. 181: "The churches in the Kehukee Association at first had *ruling elders*." They were laid aside for these reasons. 1. Their qualifications are not mentioned in the Scriptures; 2. There is no example of one in the New Testament—no mention of the time of his call and manner of ordination; 3. No work is prescribed for them.

<sup>20</sup> The laws of North Carolina have from colonial times provided that every church must keep a record book in which there is a statement showing the principles of the church and also a list of the members, and that this record book be open at all times for inspection by officers of the civil government. This was in accord with the laws of England, and there is no record that this law has been specifically repealed.

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ble records; their statements are succinct and clear, but often omit details which a historian would like to know. The earlier record books of the churches west of the Yadkin were usually made of good linen paper which had been bought and folded and made into a book by the clerk or under his direction. The ink, for the most part, was of good quality and has not faded. At first the clerk acted as treasurer also, but when need arose a treasurer was appointed.

For the conduct of their church meetings the Baptists also had another officer, a moderator, in accord with the custom in most churches. He might be the pastor, a deacon, a ruling elder, or some other prominent member of the church.

The church met usually on a stated Saturday, the one before the first, second, third or fourth Sunday of the month, but sometimes on other days of the week. Some churches regarded the Sunday also as a part of the monthly church meeting. These Saturday meetings were wholly democratic. The only function of the moderator was to see that the meetings were conducted according to the rules of decorum adopted by the church. His term of office was indefinite, but normally it was only for one meeting. Most often, the pastor, if present, was expected to act as moderator. In June, 1830, the Cove Creek Church "chose Brother Barzillai McBride moderator to preside over us at all times when we are destitute of a preacher."

Worthy of remark is the dignity and excellent manner in which the meetings of the "fierce Democratic" of the average Baptist church of this section were conducted. There was a regular order of business. Ordinarily there was a brief period of worship which called the thoughts of those present from worldly to religious matters. The seriousness thus engendered was accentuated by the inquiry into the fellowship, that is, whether each and every member was walking in accord with his high calling, which was the next



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order of business. If a member used unparliamentary language or showed dissatisfaction with the decisions of the meeting he (or she) was in danger of exclusion. Wrangles were avoided by referring matters of dispute to committees.<sup>21</sup> More will be said about this when we come to discuss the discipline exercised by these churches.

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<sup>21</sup> See minutes of the Cove Creek, Flat Rock, Eaton's and Bear Creek churches.



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## XIII

### DISCIPLINE

If anyone doubts the power of the simple gospel of the New Testament, even when preached by unlettered men without supervision of priest or prelate, and without accessories of worship other than a rude meeting house built of logs, let him consider the transformation wrought by the preaching of this gospel among the unsettled and often turbulent and fierce people who at the close of the Revolution were found in the section of North Carolina west of the Yadkin and extending along both sides of that river and westward to the present dividing line between North Carolina and Tennessee.

The members of such churches as were found in this region at the opening of the Revolution had been scattered by the internecine strife of patriots and loyalists, and the farms and homes had been ravaged and wasted by foragers and raiding parties of both armies which in the last years of the war were constantly passing and repassing. Many had been driven from their homes or had left them of their own accord for Tennessee or Kentucky, and their farms had been occupied by strangers. There was a constant shift of population, old settlers moving out and new settlers moving in. All was turmoil and every man was a law unto himself and "did what was right in his own eyes." There was much drinking of whiskey and brandy, and all public gatherings, such as elections, sales and courts, were scenes

of rowdyism and fighting. And yet these people were nearly all honest, of good stock, believing in the virtue of women, and essentially moral. The Gospel of Jesus Christ can do much for such people, as we shall see it did for this people.

Attention should be called also to the fact that at this time the civil government, whether in state or county, was almost powerless to do anything substantial for the social and moral development of these people. The State had no schools in which the numerous children might learn to read and write but had to be content to let them grow up in ignorance; it had no means of promoting temperance among a people given to hard drinking; its constables and sheriffs had to be satisfied if the turbulence and fighting at elections and other public gatherings resulted in only a few broken heads, and they had no means of preventing their recurrence at the next occasion of the kind; for only a few and more flagrant illegal sexual relations was there any punishment; there were no secular meetings at which the people might assemble and hear discussions of things that pertained to their social, industrial, educational and moral development.

These were great evils and if left uncorrected would have brought ruin and degradation to the people of this section. But they were not left to produce their natural results; there was one power that effectually opposed them, and that was the power of the gospel, whose preachers called the people to repentance, gathered them into churches, which with their strict discipline taught them the things that the Lord had commanded. It is to this we owe the fact this section of the State was able to right itself and has long been the home of an energetic, industrious, moral and religious people, second to none in this state or any other in social virtues. And yet, one would look in vain in our histories for any recognition of this work of the

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churches, which was so potent in molding the character of these people.

In the early years the Baptist churches of North Carolina made discipline of much more concern than those of the present day generally do. As was said above, they held their church meetings once a month, on a fixed Saturday, which in case the church had preaching only once a month on Sunday was on the Saturday before, a custom which still prevails in many rural Baptist churches of North Carolina. At these meetings all male members of the church, and all female members without good excuse, were expected to be present. First in the order of business generally in these meetings was the question of fellowship, that is, whether all were living as became saints. To this they believed they were committed by the terms of the covenant which most of the churches of that day adopted, part of which reads:

We solemnly join together in a holy union and fellowship, one with another, humbly submitting to the gospel and all holy duties, as required of a people in such spiritual relation.

First, We do promise and engage to walk in all holy conversation, and not to suffer sin in our brother or sister so far as it shall please God to discover it unto us, to stir up one another to love and good works, to warn, reprove, rebuke, and admonish one another in meetings according to the rule of God's word as left us in such cases.

Second, We do promise and engage in all true holiness to observe and practice all godliness and brotherly love, as much as in us lies, in hopes to render our communion acceptable to God, our Saviour, and comfortable to each of us, as likewise lovely to the rest of the people of God.

It was these articles of their covenant that the church members had in mind when they assembled and their moderator asked whether all were in fellowship. "This is a very solemn question, as fellowship strictly means Christian love, unity and harmony among all the members. If there is not full fellowship, to sit still, in such condition, is fully con-



sidered lying, and this is quite a base crime in the mind of a Primitive Baptist.”<sup>1</sup>

Another article of the covenant provided that a member should attend the meetings of the church. Neglect of this duty after a reasonable time brought action by the church. Some brother was appointed to cite the absent member to come and make an explanation. If the member came and gave satisfaction all was well, but if he did not heed the summons, the same brother who had cited the absent member the first time, or a committee, was sent to him with an ultimatum; he must heed the summons of the church or be excluded from the fellowship for his disobedience. Such a call usually brought either a satisfactory explanation or the brother came and made his peace with the church and promised to be in his seat at the meetings thereafter, for membership in a church in those days was too highly valued to be lightly surrendered.

To be at variance with a brother or a sister was recognized as inconsistent with fellowship; the churches required that the members should live in harmony and brotherly love. They should not harbor a grudge or nurse a grievance. One who had aught against a fellow member was expected to settle it in accord with the teaching of Jesus in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew and only to report it to the church as a last resort. Not always was this high ideal attained. In all the churches there were sisters, like a rather estimable sister of the Flat Rock Church, who was not only instant in telling the church of the delinquencies of members, male and female, but who often thought the story she had got too good to keep, and according to the church record, minute of October, 1794, did not deal with her fellow members according to gospel order, but

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<sup>1</sup> Record Book of Eaton's Church, 1790; Ashburn, *Fisher's River Baptist Association*, 130f.

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“published abroad whatever she could hear against the sister.” But when the time of church meeting came the covenant was interpreted as requiring that one with a grievance should report it, and one who failed in this was regarded as proving false to a sacred obligation. Accordingly, nearly all the early church record books are full of complaints of one member against another on charges which were often most trivial. By far the greater number of these charges are by female members against other female members, and it is evident that nearly all of them arose from neighborhood gossip, which in those early days played such an important part in the life of rural neighborhoods. It was a day when newspapers were almost unknown in the homes of this section; the people knew nothing, had no opportunity to know, of what was going on in the great world. For them Europe, Asia and Africa and the isles of the sea were all but non-existent; they were in complete ignorance of politics and society in London and Paris, in Philadelphia and New York, and even in the capital of their own state. Their knowledge and interest alike were circumscribed by the limits of their association and the neighborhoods to the east from which they had moved, and Tennessee and the new country to the west to which many whom they knew had gone, and from which returning emigrants brought wonderful stories of rich lands, which kindled a longing for the West in their own hearts. But these women had an interest all their own in the affairs of their church and neighborhood. They had the active and inquiring minds of the good pioneer stock that was settling the Great West. They had sharp eyes and open ears. They knew what dresses, hats and shoes every woman who came to their church had and when she got them, and when she might be expected to have something new. With their keen powers of observation on their frequent visits to their neighbors and from the quilting parties and church meetings

they gathered an intimate knowledge of almost every person in the circle of their acquaintance. They knew who kept a clean house with pots and pans free from grease and beds free from vermin, and with nice bright spreads. They knew who could sew a fine seam or weave figured coverlets. They knew who was content to be a household drudge. They knew who had white milk pails and a clean churn. They knew also the man who kept in good repair his hearth and roof, his outbuildings and fences, who saw that his wife was provided with wood winter and summer. They also knew who was a slouch and a drunkard and cared more for whiskey than for his wife. They knew the children too, even from birth, and knew the courting boys and girls and when they were likely to marry. They knew the dress, the appearance and character of every person in the neighborhood from the bedridden grandmother in some cold cabin to the housewife of their own age. All these things were the subject of gossip as on their visits to neighbors they sat around the big log fire, plying knitting needles and possibly dipping snuff. They had little else to talk about.

Like other women most of the women of western North Carolina liked to talk. Some of them doubtless had sharp and biting tongues and said harsh things about their neighbors. And what they said in the ear and confidentially to a neighbor was soon shouted from the housetop. The result was that there were many quarrels among the women of the early churches of this section, more perhaps in the mountains than elsewhere, though such quarrels were not unknown in any part of North Carolina. Very few months passed in the early years of Flat Rock Church from 1783 to 1820 and in Cove Creek Church from its organization in 1799 until 1837, when these churches were not having to deal with the reconciliation of sisters who were aggrieved with one another; there were numerous cases of like character in the other churches. Come the day of church meet-

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ing, and a sister, usually a housewife, would solemnly rise and indicate that she had a grievance against another sister, also a housewife, for telling a "falsety," or a "lye" on her. If the accused sister was in meeting she would answer that it was the accusing sister that had told the "falsety," or lied. If the sisters got too violent and beyond control in their contradictions of one another's word, the church would immediately exclude both,<sup>2</sup> but it was regular to refer such cases to as wise a committee as could be selected with instructions to reconcile the sisters. If the accused was not present the church appointed a member to cite her to come to the next meeting, a summons which she usually heeded, if not at the next meeting at least in a few months. In some instances the sisters, thus being together in the meeting, would be reconciled then and there, but more often it was necessary to refer such cases also to a committee.

Under this procedure the church at first lost (temporarily, for nearly all made proper "recantations" and got back in the church after a year or two) many of their female members, but it was not long before experience taught churches how to deal more wisely with sisters, and brethren also, who were at variance with one another. Elder John Chambers, who served the Cove Creek Church as pastor for a short time, took the lead, and instituted the practice of getting the aggrieved parties together "and hear them talk." Sometimes Elder Chambers would have them all come to the home of some brother for supper, and after supper when all were in good humor, it usually was found easy to effect the desired reconciliation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Minutes of Flat Rock Church, July, 1792.

<sup>3</sup> Cove Creek Minutes, June, July, and August, 1804: Sister M. E. excluded for untruth and not hearing church; restored. January, 1805: Sister M. E. charged by Sister M. G. with telling a falsehood on her. She was found guilty and excluded. The church had to reprove a sister who was not satisfied with the findings of the committee. December, 1808 to June, 1809, October, 1809: Sister S. D. charged with getting very angry in a difficulty with one of her neighbors and cited to come to meeting. Continued till



When a sister failed to occupy her seat, she often had a grievance against some member of the church and was reluctant to tell it. It was so in the case of Sister Mary H. of the Cove Creek Church. Her continued absences caused the church, at the October meeting of 1816, to cite her to attend and explain. It was not until the March, 1817, meeting that she finally came, and then she confessed to a grievance against Sister Sary Davis, and that her husband, seemingly not a member of the church, was not willing for her to sit with her at the church—and that was the reason of her not coming to the meeting; “and so the church chose Brethren Valentine Reese and Levi Heeth to meet with them and hear them talk together betwixt now and the next meeting and report to the church their conversations at the next meetings.” At the next meeting they reported that Sister Sarah D. had confessed that she was in the fault, and the case ended. In a few months Sister Mary H. got a letter of dismissal.

Such was the issue of most of the cases of quarrels between two of the sisters. Experience soon taught the churches to be cautious in selecting their committees of reconciliation. It is evident that some of the early committees were unwise; their efforts at reconciliation only made the two sisters at variance the more furious against one another. The wise committees, composed of men who

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January, 1810, when the two sisters gave satisfaction to the church. January-March, 1811, May, 1812: After being cited for several months, Sister M. D. came and reported she had been grieved with one of the brethren for several years. February, 1816: “A charge brought into the church by Sister N. V. against old Sister W. that she had a Bused her and called her a liar.” At the next meeting old Sister W. gave satisfaction. March, 1817, July, 1819 to Sept., 1819, June, 1820: Sister M. H. accuses Sister M. K. of stealing her thread. Settled at next meeting.

Minutes of Flat Rock Church, April, 1785: “Sister S. refusing to heed church and returning some insulting remarks is excluded.” August, 1788; August, 1790; March, 1791: “Sister C. under suspense until she can be further reconciled with Sisters W. and S.” September, 1795; June, 1796: “Sister K. C. and the two Sisters E., all three excluded, after they would not be reconciled.” The cases of discipline of this kind continued through the years.

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had some sense of humor, nearly always reported they—the aggrieved sisters—had settled their differences and were once more friends. In fact it was not in the nature of these pioneer wives to harbor resentment for any long period. Nearly all were kind of heart and desired above all else the good will of their neighbors and the fellowship of the people of God. Once excluded from the church they soon began to yearn to be back and usually the church was ready to hear their recantation and welcome them back into the fold. A typical example was Old Sister Everton of the Flat Rock Church who was excluded for a difference with a sister in March, 1796, but in August she came pleading for readmission, and, according to the minute of August 20: “On Old Sister Everton’s Declaration to the Church that she found in her a spirit of Love and Affection both towards the Church and her Adversary, K. C., the Church agreed to receive her to her seat again.”

More rarely the churches were called upon to deal with differences between a male member and a female member. In October, 1816, in the Cove Creek Church a brother reported that he was hurt with his mother-in-law. A committee was appointed to settle the matter and report at the next meeting. In this they were not successful, but at the December meeting reported that the brother had moved away illegally, without a letter of dismissal, presumably leaving his mother-in-law behind. For this sin, and for the charge that he had not paid a debt his wife made at the store of Brother Valentine Reese, he was excluded from the fellowship.

The churches of that day also undertook to deal with what today is known as breach of promise; at least, such seems to be the interpretation of rather vague minutes recording that a sister, evidently unmarried, had brought a charge against a brother, also evidently unmarried, for lying. In one instance the brother so charged confessed

and on his request was excommunicated. More often the report would be brought to the next meeting that it was all a mistake; the parties were reconciled, and, as the records in an instance or two seem to show, married soon after. Sometimes a wronged sister brought such a charge against a brother who was a member of another church. In January, 1819, a sister reported to the church at Bear Creek that she was grieved with a member of the Deep Creek Church; she had made complaint to that church but was turned away with the statement that she could not be heard unless she would change her membership to them. She found her church ready to hear her and help her and a committee was appointed to take the matter up with the Deep Creek Church; the result is not indicated. The records show that the churches of that day regarded it as no light offense to trifle with the affections of a young woman, and that when one had been deceived they were ready to call for correction and champion her cause.<sup>4</sup>

The churches also felt under obligation to protect their members from unjust accusations. No one, whether man or woman, could bring serious charges against the character of a woman without being made to feel the displeasure of the church.<sup>5</sup> Other charges often brought before the churches were of personal and individual delinquencies. One of these was anger. Sometimes a sister would manifest her displeasure by jumping from her seat in time of meeting and leaving the church in disorder, and unless she showed signs of repentance after a reasonable time she was excluded.<sup>6</sup> At another time, a sister of the Flat Rock Church spoke her mind pretty freely to the committee appointed to admonish her. Her language was considered insulting

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<sup>4</sup> Record Book of Cove Creek Church for January and February, 1806; of Cove Creek, January, 1819.

<sup>5</sup> Minutes of Cove Creek Church, June, 1825; July, 1816.

<sup>6</sup> Minutes of Cove Creek Church, November, 1818.

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and she was excluded.<sup>7</sup> The brethren were as subject to this weakness, rather more so, than the sisters. Pillars of the church, deacons and ministers, such as Ebenezer Frost and Valentine Reese, and Elders William Petty and Barzillai McBride, sometimes arose in church meeting and confessed that they had been very angry and said bad words, and in an instance or two knocked a man down at an election.<sup>8</sup> The minutes of the Flat Rock Church for December, 1792, show that Brother Abraham McBride confessed to getting into a violent passion. In March, 1800, Brother Dawdon confessed to have been in an affray at a muster. Later Elder B. McBride, confessed to the Cove Creek Church that he had got angry and beat a man. Minutes, February, 1832. In the same church, July, 1835, Valentine Reese confessed that he got very angry with a man at the new church. In the Flat Rock Church meeting in January, 1804, Brother Isaac Winston confessed to falling into a passion at a public gathering. In the same church in September, 1806, Brother Joshua Noble confessed to have been in a riot and fight at the last election; his case was laid over until the next meeting when he was excused.

In those pioneer days a sister sometimes let her temper

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<sup>7</sup> Minutes, Flat Rock Church.

<sup>8</sup> The cause of Elder William Petty's anger was that a young male member of his church, Flat Rock, took away his daughter. On that occasion, according to a minute, November 12, 1791, at an occasional meeting called by Elder Petty for the purpose of considering it, "the matter concerning Richard Stevens' conduct in taking away Brother Petty's daughter under age without consent, was fully illustrated, and Brother Petty fully rehearsed his grief and trial, and also confessed his fault in being exasperated and speaking many harsh words &c., from which the Church then agreed to look over his conduct, and charged John Stevens with being privy to his Brother's conduct and not informing Brother Petty, from whence it was laid over to the next meeting." At the next meeting, a week later, Brother John Stevens confessed that he could not see himself in error in not telling Brother Petty about his brother's designs to steal his daughter, but he had no desire to "hang on" the church, and was excluded. His Brother Richard spoke for himself and said "that if the matter now in dispute was yet to be done, he would still persist in doing it, and on the Church's receiving no acknowledgment wherein he saw he had committed a trespass against Brother Petty, they thought fit to exclude him also."



get out of control and committed excesses. At the October, 1809, meeting of the Cove Creek Church, Sister Sary D. was charged with getting angry in a difficulty with one of her neighbors, but in the meeting of the following January the sisters settled and gave the church satisfaction. More serious was a case reported to the same church at the meeting of October, 1817, when a sister was charged with beating another sister with stones and stunning her child, and blaspheming. But the case seems not to have been as bad as reported; at the meeting in January, 1818, she was present and acknowledged her crime, and at the meeting in March, 1818, she gave satisfaction to all.

Doubtless the promptness of the Baptist churches of this section in dealing with such cases had its part in keeping down family feuds in western North Carolina. They taught their members that it was not Christlike to quarrel and brawl and encouraged them to live on good terms with their neighbors and keep the peace. It was the churches with their wholesome discipline that set the standards for correct living in those early days when officers of the law seem to have been helpless in the face of public disorder.

The minutes of the various churches in western North Carolina reveal that it was not the State but the churches that had taught the fierce settlers the sanctities of married life and punished violations of them.

Until the year 1790 there was no law against bigamy in North Carolina, since it was not a crime under the common law, and there were many double marriages, especially in the shifting population of the western part of the State. Here it was easy for a man or woman who had a wife or husband whom they had abandoned in some remote section of the State to escape detection, whether they had married before leaving their former home, or, as was more frequently the case, they had married the second time after settling in their new home. The character of most of these mar-

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riages is indicated by the preamble to the Act of 1790, of the State Legislature, which recites that many evil-disposed persons, going from one part of the country to another, and into places where they are not known, do marry, though they have another husband or wife still living, to the utter destruction of the peace and happiness of families. Sometimes, both before and after the passage of the act, the Baptist churches would find that they had in their membership men and women of this kind, probably, though not certainly, those who had married before the passage of the act, the penalty for the violation of which was death. In such a case the action of the church was prompt; the guilty parties, although at the time living correct lives, were excluded. Such was done in May, 1800, a few months after the constitution of the Cove Creek Church, when it excluded George Davis and Sary Davis "for dubble marriedg" and made a rule "that we never will receive any other under the same character."

The writer has found no references to divorce in the minutes of the churches of this section before the year 1830. The first divorce act for North Carolina was passed by the General Assembly of 1814, before which time divorces were few, each being granted by special act of the General Assembly. From the first, however, the Baptist churches had sanctions designed to promote correct relations between husband and wife. Unfaithfulness to the marriage vow, upon credible report of it, brought immediate expulsion to the guilty party.<sup>9</sup> In not a few instances the church took notice of disorderly relations between husband and wife, and sought to restore harmony and peace, but often without success. The reconciliations affected were of short duration. The troubles usually ended with parting asunder,

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<sup>9</sup> Typical is the following from the Cove Creek Church Minutes for April, 1816: "A charge was brought into the Church by Sister R. E. against Brother W. E., concerning his misbehaviour with a young woman, and the Church immediately excluded him for the same."

for which the church would invariably exclude both. If they repented, the church was ready to receive them into fellowship again.<sup>10</sup> In July, 1797, the Flat Rock Church had two cases to deal with of a slightly different nature. In one case, Sister Mary J., whose husband was afterwards a faithful minister, was excluded because "she had made an elopement from her husband and refused to return." By elopement is meant only that she had left her husband's household. She had previously been zealous in bringing the attention of the church to the infraction of church rules by others, and was a constant attendant on its meetings; she found the discipline good for her and was soon back in the fellowship. The other case was that of Brother Richard P. and wife. Her crime was that she refused to be subject to her husband, and it was he that came to the church with it—a measure which brought him, as well as his wife, sorrow. She was excluded, while the church at the same time excluded him on some trivial charge. Both, however, soon repented and were back in the church. Although the members of the churches of this section in those early days had their faults and weaknesses, the evidence is abundant that, as said above, they loved the brethren, and once out of the church, their hearts yearned for full fellowship with them. It should be said too that there are other indications that the churches did not encourage quarreling couples to bring their troubles into the church. In June, 1802, the Bear Creek Church voted to exclude a wife who had brought a

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<sup>10</sup> See Minutes of Dutchman's Creek for March 8, 1783: "Sister E. J. charged with unbecoming discourse to her husband; church laid her under censure;" restored at next meeting. Minutes of Bear Creek Church, November, 1797, and June, 1812. "Brother J. S. and wife cited to next meeting on report of disorder between them." They came and satisfied the church. Fifteen years later they were again reported for disorder in the family.

In July, 1816, the Cove Creek Church excluded James I. and wife for parting asunder, and for a flat contradiction between them. There are records of other cases of like kind in the minutes of the Cove Creek Church, January-April, 1835, and July-August, 1836, which resulted in the exclusion of all four of the parties concerned.

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serious charge against her husband which on full investigation proved to be groundless.

In their concern that the life of the home should be pure the churches dealt with other things than the relations of husband and wife. In their talk before their children the mothers were expected to be careful to use no bad language, and on one occasion a husband and wife were excluded for keeping in their house "a certain strange girl."<sup>11</sup>

One of the great services of these early churches of the Yadkin section was to maintain high standards of purity of life among pioneer people. These settlers were nearly all of good English or Scotch-Irish, or German stock, with whom sexual morality was the normal condition. But in the unsettled and turbulent state of the people in the period that followed the Revolutionary War, it was the churches which almost alone prevented moral degeneracy.

It was by discipline as well as by precept that this virtue was taught in the Baptist churches at that time in the region west of the Yadkin. If any member yielded to baser lusts the punishment was severe. One noticeable thing, however, is that in the minutes of all the churches it is much more frequently the women whose names appear on charges of immorality, although naturally the male offenders, whether in the church or out of it, were as numerous as the females.

Nearly all of the few cases of immorality among women were on the charge of bastardy. The cases were rare, for one reason, because marriage was normal for all young people in that section at that time. In nearly every case of going astray the woman had been deceived. And it was a day and place in which deception meant conception, since birth-control was unknown or regarded with horror and as murder. The records indicate that it was with deepest sorrow that a church heard of the weakness of one of its younger sisters. Obedient to a strong sense of duty a deacon

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<sup>11</sup> Flat Rock Minutes, April, 1788; August, 1793; September, 1812.



or other faithful member would rise in meeting and announce that he had a grievance against some beloved young member, the daughter probably of faithful and much respected father and mother. Then the church would appoint a committee of two or three approved sisters and as many brothers to visit the young woman and talk it over with her in the spirit of love and sympathy. Sometimes the erring one would seek to hide her shame and get rid of the committee as soon as possible by some virtual confession, such as the statement that she thought the church could get along without her as well as with her. But in every case, such offenders were excluded from the fellowship. This may seem harsh to the men and women of our day, but in that time, when moral standards were being fixed, the churches did not think any compromise was possible; it was their duty to be severe, since anything short of exclusion might have been regarded as toleration of a ruinous evil. A proper committee knew how to reveal to the young woman that in being excluded she had not passed beyond the love and care of the church, and that its doors was not closed to the penitent; and in some instances, after a decent time, a penitent was restored to her seat in its meetings.<sup>12</sup> It is also proper to note that in March, 1836, the Cove Creek Church excluded one whose sin was discovered only after her marriage. Her husband was not in the Cove Creek fellowship.<sup>13</sup>

More rarely the charge against an erring sister was simply adultery. In the nature of the case such charges were not made until the evidence of wrong-doing was well established, with the result that the action of the church was much more summary. The accused was often immediately excluded. That the churches were too hasty in some

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<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Flat Rock Church, October, 1793; June, 1811; July, 1811.  
 Minutes of Cove Creek Church, November, 1816; March, 1836.

<sup>13</sup> Such church action is not without parallel in the present century.

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of these instances is shown by the fact that sometimes the excluded sister, after a period of several years, was again admitted to the fold.<sup>14</sup>

As a part of the care of the churches for the clean living of their members was their concern that the social relations of their members should not be with the carnally-minded. The young ladies who attended the Huntsville Fair must restrain the exuberance of spirits which such occasions induced in that day as in this.<sup>15</sup> But it was fiddling, dancing and frolicking that were regarded by the churches with the greatest displeasure. In the minds of the people and in actual practice dancing and fiddling were associated with worldliness and other low amusements, which had a strong appeal to certain types of church members, as is indicated in the following found in the Cove Creek minutes for January, 1816: "A report going out against Brother Will D. concerning his playing of the fiddle and getting groggy and horse-racing and many other heinous deeds contrary to the rule of the Gospel and the Church, delegated Brother V. Reese to go to him and cite him to come to our next meeting." (It was March before the young man came forward and confessed; the church loved the boy and forgave him.)<sup>16</sup> Almost every church had to discipline some of their younger members who under the charm of the playing of the fiddle "acted too carnally" and did things they were afterwards ashamed of.<sup>17</sup> Usually those who had violated the rules of

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<sup>14</sup> See Minutes of Bear Creek Church for June, 1825, and November, 1834.

<sup>15</sup> Minutes of Flat Rock Church, April and May, 1793. "On Sister E.'s acknowledgment of acting too carnally in her Conversation, she is again reinstated."

<sup>16</sup> The fiddle seems to have been almost the sole musical instrument of the people of the Upper Yadkin and New River. The young man who owned a fiddle and could play it was welcome in any company and in the mountain homes. But if he played it for people to "dance after," the church took notice of it, and unless he gave satisfaction, excluded him. Minutes of Cove Creek Church, April and May, 1837.

<sup>17</sup> From the Flat Rock Minutes for January, 1795: "Sister S. C. came before the Church and related her misconduct in tarrying too long in a Carnal Company and partaking of Carnal Conduct by permitting the fiddler

the church by dancing and frolicking accepted the discipline in good part, and promised to do so no more; in fact it sometimes happened that the offender would bring the matter before the church, and ask forgiveness.<sup>18</sup> In some instances staid members who were present seemingly for the purpose of seeing that the young people did not go too far at frolics were called to account, but when they came before the church they never failed to give satisfaction.<sup>19</sup> If a member allowed his children to attend dances the church admonished him. Probably because the game of catball was regarded as having an immoral influence if played by those of both sexes, a young man and a young woman were cited to answer for that "crime" by the Cove Creek Church in April, 1817. Before the next meeting they were married, but a month later on the report of a committee they were excluded for "neglect and folly." It is probable that they regarded the charge too trivial to be answered while the church could not tolerate disobedience.

In addition to the fiddlers there were another type of young men in this section, some of them in the churches, who were general favorites, but regarded with some suspicion by the more sedate members of the church. These were the rough-riding, roystering young bloods. They might be seen at all gatherings in a radius of twenty miles. They knew all the housewives and often drew rein to pass a word with them, and answer their inquiries about people too

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to sit in her lap and there to play the fiddle, and as she confesses to have no fellowship with herself the church concludes to have none at present." She was back in the fellowship before long.

<sup>18</sup> The Minutes of the Cove Creek Church for January, 1838, show how two sisters of the same family name were differently affected. Sister Elizabeth confessed to having helped run a reel at a frolic, and she told the church that she was sorry for it and promised to do so no more, and the church forgave her. On the other hand, Sister Rhoda S. cited to attend the next meeting told the messenger that "she would never come to meeting again unless she changed her mind," and was excluded.

<sup>19</sup> Cove Creek Minutes for April, 1823: Sister Elizabeth Curtis and Brother Reuben Dotson and wife were cited to next meeting, all for attending frolick—Sister Curtis for staying some time, and Brother Dotson and wife for staying all night. All three gave satisfaction.

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distant for them to visit. In the Flat Rock Church meeting of January, 1793, one of these was charged by a zealous sister, who was herself afterwards excluded, with "drinking, and riding from place to place at unseasonable hours." When he came before the church it was ready to dismiss the case, but at the next meeting the sister returned with amended charges and the support of a male member of doubtful piety who was afterwards excluded, and succeeded in having the church cut him off. Possibly, this was the proper action, but it is only one of numerous cases of the same kind, which indicate that the churches of that time and section were poorly able to keep in their fellowship these fine young fellows. Some, however, escaped censure, and later in life were among the best in the membership.<sup>20</sup>

Among the male members, however, it was the charge of drunkenness or "drinking to excess," that most often appears in the discipline cases of the early churches west of the Yadkin. In some of the churches until well after the year 1800 there were few church meetings in which some brother, more rarely some sister, was not reported for drinking spirituous liquors.<sup>21</sup> Whiskey and brandy seemed to run from springs in the territory of the original Yadkin Association, and drinking was common, and even in the standards of that day drinking to excess was frequent. As was told above, Elder William Cook was often brought before the churches of which he was a member on this charge—first, in the Dutchman's Creek Church; second, in the Bear Creek Church, from which he was excluded "on account of drunkenness," but soon restored; and third, in

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<sup>20</sup> Minutes of Cove Creek Church, September, 1800, W. V., charged with getting groggy and living too "parlite." He was soon restored, but six years later asked to be excluded because of his loose-living. See also, Cove Creek Church Minutes for November, 1805; July, 1819; June, 1806; August, 1830; etc.

<sup>21</sup> The drinks were brandy and whiskey. Once cider is mentioned as the drink, but never wine; even the wine for the Lord's Supper had to be purchased.



the Flat Rock Church, of which he was pastor from 1805 to his death in 1812. There is only dubious suggestion that any other ministers had this weakness, and in every church those who were temperate and sober prevailed, if not in number, at least in influence. It was they who strictly called to account their fellow members who so often had to answer the charge of being intoxicated, the polite word for drunkenness which began to be used in the minutes after the turn of the century, in the mutilated form "togsicated." In most cases the offender acknowledged his guilt and professing repentance, asked the church to forgive him, which the church regularly did if drunkenness was the only offense and the offender was thought sincere. In cases of habitual drinkers the churches would often vote to bear with the offender for a while, or would openly state that final decision would be deferred two or three months to see whether the brother offending could keep his promise. Sometimes there were complications; the offending brother had not only been intoxicated, but had used loud, violent, and possibly profane language; he had been engaged in brawling, rioting and fighting at an election or muster or other public gathering. Even in these cases if repentance seemed sincere, the penalty was not often exclusion but suspension for some months. On the other hand, if repentance was not regarded as sincere, or if the drinking brother did not promptly come before the church, either voluntarily or when cited, he was excluded.

In a few instances sisters were charged with drinking to excess, but only in one or two was the charge proved. In fact, while drinking was almost universal among the male population of this section in the quarter century after the close of the Revolution, women seem to have drunk very little or not at all. It is certain that nothing made a woman more angry than to have the charge of excessive drinking made against her. When she learned of such a charge she

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did not wait for some one to report it to the church, but she came herself with the most emphatic denial—and the church took her word for it.<sup>22</sup>

Belief in witches and familiar spirits had not altogether been outgrown among the people of western North Carolina. But the church at Flat Rock showed that it was wiser than the Puritans at Salem in refusing to listen to stories about them. Accordingly, when in June, 1791, a sister of that church charged another sister with bewitching her, and was unable to furnish proof of her charges, she was promptly excommunicated. At the same meeting a brother related "a tedious train of conversation between himself and a Familiar Spirit, asserting that he had taken a secret oath administered by a certain person who transformed himself into different shapes, with other ridiculous reports concerning said wizard; the Church unanimously charged him with sealing the works of darkness by an oath, and accordingly excommunicated him." After this we hear no more of witches and wizards in the churches of this section.

In the minutes of these churches appear many illuminating sidelights on the social advancement of the people, since it was to the churches that its members carried their problems of almost every nature, social, legal, and family affairs.

In March, 1792, a member of the Flat Rock Church charged that one of the most respected members of the church had used a faulty measure in selling him brandy six months before. The member charged with this serious offense was prominent in the church and often represented it in the association and on important committees, and his wife and other members of his family were also highly regarded and useful members of the church. This case caused trouble in the church for several months. The accused brother took it as a very serious matter to be charged

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<sup>22</sup> Minutes, Cove Creek Church, February, 1830; Minutes, Flat Rock Church, May and June, 1795.

with defrauding a brother, and seeing that it might compromise the standing of the church in the community for him to be retained in its membership, offered to take letters of dismissal for himself and members of his family. Finally, however, a committee appointed for the purpose made a full investigation and reported, unanimously exonerating him. The brother who brought the charge and some members of his family, who also were highly respected members of the church, admitted that they were mistaken, seemingly having evidence that the shortness in the amount of brandy, discovered after some months, was due to surreptitious removal from the jug after it was set in a closet of their home.

Already in 1802 trade in slaves was considered dishonorable in the Flat Rock Church; a brother being summoned to answer for it, withdrew from the fellowship before the next church meeting. The churches were also circumspect in guarding the interests of widows and children when executors or guardians showed signs of defrauding them.<sup>23</sup> If a member made a business contract and did not keep it faithfully, he was summoned before the church.<sup>24</sup> The churches

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<sup>23</sup> Minutes of Cove Creek Church, Minutes of Flat Rock Church.

<sup>24</sup> In the Cove Creek Church, a case about paying for a gun, part cash, part barter, came before the church. The cash was promptly paid, and the greater part of the barter, but finally the seller refused to take any more barter offered by the buyer and seemingly was keeping the gun. Under the influence of Elder James Chambers they came to an understanding. In the same church in February and March, 1821, there was a complaint about sorry weaving: "An allegation brought into the church by Sister D. against Brother Thomas S., was that 'he had flew from a contract with her'—the contract was that she had hired his wife to weave two bed covers, and his wife hired her sisters to weave them, and after they was wove and she had got them home she brought them back to Sis Anne Smith and made complaint that they was not wove good and he agreed to find wool and she the Sd Dotson to spin it, and sister Anne his wife to weave one more for her, and then he flew from it and would not suffer his wife to weave it." At the March meeting the church, after long debate, decided against the brother. In the same church, December, 1815, Brother W. W. had to give account of "his having taken Mrs. Heath's mare into the woods and confining her, to keep her out of his corn." He was present at the January meeting and satisfied the church. In January, 1838, the Cove Creek Church called a brother to account for building a fence across the lands of John Hard's heirs, for which he was later excluded. Sometimes it was a sister who was disciplined for trying to get what "the church thought was not

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of this early day in this section refused to tolerate gambling, or anything that looked like it.<sup>25</sup>

The cases of discipline referred to above, a few of literally thousands, reveal unmistakably that the church meetings of the Baptist of western North Carolina in the early days were schools for training their members in good personal habits, harmonious relation between husband and wife, the use of chaste language before children and others, and also schools of good citizenship. In all these things they were practically the only agency for the improvement of the people of this section and transformed them from their pioneer fierceness into orderly and peaceful relations with one another and into good citizens. The section beyond the Blue Ridge was later known as "the lost province," but though the State had lost touch with its people, the churches were mindful of them and in their associations and other meetings cultivated harmony and friendship.

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her right"; Cove Creek Minutes, November, 1825. The charge reads "she tried to get James Swift's land contrary to a covenant made between her mother and the rest of the heirs and for talking backwards and forwards."

<sup>25</sup> In February, 1836, the Cove Creek Church had laid before it for consideration the query: "Is it right for a member of a Baptist church to shoot or be judge of shooting for prizes, or even to be a-drinking with the world when they are shooting for spirits?" At the April meeting it was answered that it was wrong for any member to be guilty of any of these things. In May, 1797, after a month of consideration, Eaton's Church declared that a lottery is "a species of gambling, and therefore inexpedient for Christians."

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## XIV

### THE YADKIN ASSOCIATION

The first reference to an association in connection with any church in the territory later occupied by the Yadkin Association is the listing by Morgan Edwards in his Note Book of the church at Shallow Fords as one of the churches of the Sandy Creek Association.<sup>1</sup> In the church record book of the Dutchman's Creek Church, a minute under date of August 28, 1778, shows that the church was considering joining "the Association," and another minute of October 13, 1787, shows that the church had voted to join some association, but there the record ends, and the church was dissolved soon after.

The association spoken of in the first reference was probably the Sandy Creek, since the church was meeting at this time with the Deep Creek Church, which was already a member of that association. It was to the Strawberry Association that all of the churches of this section, except that of Deep Creek under the pastoral care of Rev. Joseph Murphy, belonged before 1790. Its churches were nearly all in Virginia. According to Semple, it was formed about the year 1776.<sup>2</sup> The greater number of its North Carolina

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<sup>1</sup> Morgan Edwards also names another church, Holston, in Virginia, which in 1772 was a member of the Sandy Creek Association. The Baptists from Sandy Creek who came as refugees to the northwest section of the State over which the Yadkin Association at first extended, probably had churches in North Carolina. They are mentioned by Morgan Edwards, Semple, and Benedict as members of the Sandy Creek Association. See Volume I, p. 384 f.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 261.

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churches and some of those in Virginia were in the section where the two Murphys, Samuel Harris, Dutton Lane, and other Separates had first labored, and that the churches they established should have joined in forming an association that was nominally Particular is evidence that the distinction between these two groups of Baptists was already disregarded, although it was not until 1787 and 1788 that the associations in Virginia and North Carolina voted formal union.<sup>3</sup>

The plan to have an independent association consisting of churches for the most part in North Carolina seems to have originated with Rev. William Petty, pastor of the church first known by his name, and later called Hunting Creek, but since 1802, Flat Rock. All records both of his own church and of the Yadkin Association show that he was an able and progressive leader. In these years he was traveling far and wide, going as far as the church known as Head of the Yadkin, near the present town of Patterson in Caldwell County, on matters concerning the churches, and had already begun those missionary labors that resulted in the organization of the Grassy Knob Baptist Church in northern Iredell and a half dozen other churches in that section. He was not only enterprising and aggressive but he had the wisdom to see that in the churches of his section and time, among whose members there were few or none who had books or periodicals or other printed matter, there was need of meetings which could be generally attended, in order that the members of these churches might hear discussions of religious principles and doctrines, especially those of the Baptists, and of all other things that concern the life and conduct of Baptist churches.

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<sup>3</sup> Vol. I, pp. 475, 493. Minutes of Dutchman's Creek Church for June 5, 1773. Ms. Minutes of the Yadkin Association, the group of churches formally organized in 1790, June 7, 1788: "the Bill of Union effected by the Regular(s) and Separates in a Committee held at Dover on James River & State of Virginia, was presented and adopted by us." Minutes of Flat Rock Church, June, 1788.

With these things in mind, in the year 1786, he led the church of which he was pastor, then called Petty's Meeting House, but later Flat Rock, to invite the other churches west of the Yadkin in North Carolina, and some just across the line in Virginia, belonging to the Strawberry Association, to send delegates to his church, about two miles west of Brooks' Cross Roads.

Eleven churches accepted this invitation and continued for the years 1787, 1788 and 1789 to meet as "a branch of the Virginia (Strawberry) Association." Since no list of churches is given for any of these years we are left largely to conjecture as to just what churches they were. For two meetings, October, 1786, and June, 1788, the Association convened at Petty's Meeting House. In May, 1787, at Mitchell's River in Wilkes County; in October, 1789, at Brier Creek, Wilkes County. Other churches mentioned incidentally as belonging to the group were Little Yadkin (Brother Stone's church) and Eaton's Church. In addition, the pastors of other churches are mentioned as connected with the Association: Cleveland Coffee, pastor of Catawba Church, in the present county of Burke, Lazarus Whitehead, pastor of the Grassy Knob Church, Iredell County, William Hammond, pastor of the South Roaring River Church, Wilkes County.<sup>4</sup> It seems certain then that these eight churches were among those that at one time or another sent delegates to this branch association.

The first moderator was Elder John Cleveland, while for the remaining three years Elder George McNeill served in that office. The first clerk was John Wright, but for the other meetings the clerk was Richard Allen.

Inasmuch as this was in these years a branch association

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<sup>4</sup>Dr. G. W. Greene, in "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," in the *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, Vol. III, p. 71, says that the family of Elder Cleveland Coffey belonged to the territory of the present county of Caldwell. In 1786, he was sent as a delegate of the Yadkin Association to the parent association, the Strawberry.

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of the Strawberry Association, it sent delegates to the annual meetings of the parent association with a record of its proceedings to be approved or disapproved. There is no record of any disapproval, and approval is indicated in some such record as this: "All of which was approbated by the Virginia association on the second Saturday in October, 1787." So far as recorded, the delegates sent to the parent association were: George McNeill, 1786, 1788, 1789; John Stone, 1786; Cleveland Coffey, 1786; Andrew Baker, 1788, 1789; Brother Martin, 1788; William Hammond, 1788, 1789; Lazarus Whitehead, 1789.

In all other respects this branch association functioned as an independent body. Its order of business was the same: the assembling according to appointment; the reading of the names of delegates; the electing of a moderator and clerk; the appointment of a committee on order of business; the hearing of reports; the consideration of queries submitted by the churches or formulated by a committee appointed for the purpose; preaching on Sunday by several ministers chosen by the Association; the appointment of delegates to other bodies, and naming the place and time of the next meeting; and finally, adjournment.

In these early associational meetings the queries were often for instruction, and often they were debated with much ability and heard with great attention. The six proposed by the committee at the first meeting, that in 1786, were on fundamental subjects. The first was, What is an Association? The Answer, An Advisory Council. The second, Who are the fitting members to compose an Association? The Answer, Ministers and ablest members. The third, Whether church queries should be debated in the association, or in the church where it originated? The Answer, In the church. The fourth, Whether it is justifiable in a minister to broach a new principle and offer it in public without first consulting his brethren in Fraternity? Answer,



Not justifiable. The fifth, Whether the washing of feet and the salutation of the Holy Kiss be a bar in fellowship? Answer, No bar. The sixth, Whether a brother for the future might be tolerated to hold a public office under the Legislature without first consulting the brethren? Answer, No.<sup>5</sup> Many of the queries offered during these years still have interest as statements of policies already established by the Baptist churches of this section, some of which reveal the social condition of the people.

In 1789, even members of Baptist churches were already resorting to the common practice of winning votes by treating voters with liquor. In the minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1789 is the query: "Whether a member may carry liquor to any place of an election and offer himself as a Candidate and treat the people after the election? Ans. We think it disorder."<sup>6</sup> The evil continued for many years. In 1817, the Sandy Creek Association, meeting at Bear Creek Church, Chatham County, passed a strong set of resolutions against the practice, reciting that the Association was concurring with the Flat River Association "in inviting all professing Christians, and lovers of good order and morality, to lend their co-operation to avert the evils

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<sup>5</sup> That this practice was long maintained in this section is indicated by the following taken from the Minutes of the Cove Creek Church for August, 1830: "Br. D. Farthing being appointed Justice of the Peace by the General Assembly asks leave to accept place; granted." Occasionally, a brother desiring to be a candidate for a representative or senator in the General Assembly first got the approval of the church of which he was a member. Minutes of the Flat Rock Church for July, 1790, show that Brother (S. S.) Wood was granted the approval of the church "on his offering himself a candidate for the county of Surry." There is no record that such approval was ever asked by Thomas Wright of the same church who represented Surry County in the House of Commons in 1798, 1801, 1802 and 1803, and in the Senate in the years 1807-1817, except in 1809.

<sup>6</sup> It will be observed that the treating was "after the election," which seems to mean that it was the candidate's method of expressing appreciation, hardly a kind of bribe, since the treating was done after he had got the vote. Twelve years later, in 1801, (See Potter's *Revisal of Laws of North Carolina*, Chapter 580) the General Assembly passed laws against treating "with either meat or drink, on any day of the election or any day previous thereto," which seems to have been interpreted as applying only to the election of members of the General Assembly.

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which this custom entails upon us." And the Association agreed to send George Dismukes to wait upon the Legislature with the memorial of the body. Another set of resolutions of the Sandy Creek Association reveal that the evil was widespread and in 1829 was engaging the attention of associations in Georgia and South Carolina as well as in North Carolina. Other interesting queries of these early years will be discussed later.

On August 28, 29, 30, 1790, the first independent Yadkin Association was held. The place was Eaton's Meeting House, on Dutchman's Creek, a branch of the Flat Rock Church, but constituted an independent church a few months later.<sup>7</sup> The introductory sermon was preached by Rev. Andrew Baker, at that time pastor of the Beaver Creek Church in Wilkes County. His text, characteristic of the evangelistic fervor which has always reigned in the churches of the Yadkin Association, was I Cor. 1:30: "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." Fourteen churches sent delegates to this meeting. They were Beaver Creek, New River, North Fork, Brier Creek, South Fork of Roaring River, Mitchell River, Head of Yadkin, Roaring River—all reported from Wilkes County of that day—Timber Ridge and Jersey of Rowan County; Grassy Knob, Iredell County; Catawba River, Burke County; Hunting Creek (Mr. Petty's church), Surry County; and Rye Valley, located in the state of Virginia. These churches were situated in a wide extent of territory, roughly all that part of North Carolina north of Salisbury and west of the western boundary of Guilford County, while one church, Rye Valley, was on the Holston River in Virginia.

The most easterly of these churches was that of the Jersey

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<sup>7</sup> Minutes of Flat Rock Church, June, 1790; initial minute of Eaton's Church, December, 1790.

## YADKIN ASSOCIATION

Settlement on the Yadkin River in the present county of Davidson. An account of the early history of this church has been given already in the first volume of this work, and frequent references have been made to it in former chapters of this volume. It had been reorganized on October 16, 1784, with Drury Sims as pastor, but in 1790 was without a minister. In August, 1818, it was dismissed to join the newly formed Pee Dee Association.

Some account has already been given of the churches at Timber Ridge, Flat Rock, and Grassy Knob, and we can turn to the other churches in Wilkes which then included in its border the present counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga and part of Caldwell and Avery.

The oldest of these was the church known as the Head of the Yadkin. "It is located on the Yadkin River, one mile below the village of Patterson." Greene<sup>8</sup> supposed that it was constituted about 1760, but in all probability it was some years later. Asplund's<sup>9</sup> date is 1779. In 1793 it had no pastor, and its members numbered 30. When Bishop Spangenberg was in camp on Wilson's Creek, which he called "the upper fork of the Second or Middle Little River," on November 29, 1752, he said in his diary: "We are here in a region that has perhaps been seldom visited since the creation of the world. We are some 70 or 80 miles from the last settlement in North Carolina, and have come over terrible mountains, and often through very dangerous ways." In 1760 the Cherokees were warring on the colonials. It is very improbable that a church was founded only eight years after Spangenberg's visit in a region subjected to such turmoil.<sup>10</sup> At the time of the formation of the Yadkin Association the church had several branches, which have since become strong churches and continue till this day.

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<sup>8</sup> "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 65 f.

<sup>9</sup> *Baptist Register*, fifth edition.

<sup>10</sup> See *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, I, p. 54.

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Among these were Globe, Mulberry and Lower Creek, called also Allen's Meeting House or Bennett's, in Burke County. The church was in 1791 credited by Asplund with 63 members but no minister.<sup>11</sup> The Head of the Yadkin Church continued in the Association until 1797, when it was one of the churches dismissed to form the Mountain Association. Its delegates to the Association were as follows, for the years given: October, 1791: James Coffey, Eli Coffey, Jonathan Boone; December, 1791: James Coffey; 1793: Jonathan Boone; 1794: Eli Coffey; 1795: Jonathan Boone; 1796: Eli Coffey, Thomas Coffey; 1797: Eli Coffey, Jonathan Boone. This church has continued to this day, and—in 1949—is in the Caldwell Association and reports 355 members.

The Catawba Church, whose territory was contiguous to that of the Head of the Yadkin Church on the west and south, was located somewhere in that part of Burke County which in 1841 became a part of Caldwell, probably in the direction of the present town of Morganton, but its exact location is unknown to the writer. In 1791 Asplund credits it with 159 members, its pastor being Cleveland Coffey, while its licentiate was Richard Osgatharp. Its delegates while it was a member of the Yadkin Association were: 1791: Cleveland Coffey, Lemuel Sanders, Richard Osgatharp, William Bradshaw; 1793: Richard Osgatharp; 1796: Thomas Scott; 1797: William Bradshaw, Thomas Scott; 1800: William Bradshaw, Thomas England. In 1800 it was dismissed from the Association. The name of the association

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<sup>11</sup> See statement of Greene, "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 65 f., and the minutes of the Yadkin Association for April, October and December, 1791. There was a contention whether the branches named in the text belonged to the Head of the Yadkin or to the Catawba Church. This contention, says Greene, began in 1788, but it seems to have continued until 1791, when the Association was asked to settle it, and sent Brethren Joseph Murphy and Benjamin Martin to mediate in the dispute.



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to which this church went is not given, but it seems clear that it was Broad River, formed in 1800, and which in 1801 admitted to its membership the only known church in the Catawba River section named Smyrna, in all probability an arm of the church called Catawba River.

Another of the fourteen churches which was represented at the formation of the Association in 1790 was Rye Valley. It was located in Virginia on the Holston River.<sup>12</sup> It was represented in the Association by the following delegates: 1793: Davis Buster; 1794: Nathan Morgan; 1796: Charles Buster; 1797: Henry Vise. Although it was voted dismission in 1795 along with the churches of Sinclair's Bottom and Three Forks of New River, it remained in the Association until 1797, when it probably joined in the formation of the Mountain Association. Asplund lists it in the churches of Wythe County with 30 members, Stephen Wheeler, minister.

Beaver Creek Church was another of the churches that joined in the formation of the Yadkin Association. It is in the southwestern corner of the present county of Wilkes and gets its name from a creek of that name which flows into the Yadkin from the south. Greene assumes that this church was constituted in 1779, since the records of Dutchman's Creek Church for May 8, 1779, record that "A petition was presented from a destitute people living on Beaver Creek in Wilkes County for helps in a constitution," but as the time was not indicated, the Dutchman's Creek Church "concluded to write and find out the time." Probably the church was constituted in this year, and had Elder John Barlow for its pastor, who, in 1791, was a delegate of the church to the Association. In August and September, 1782,

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<sup>12</sup> The Yadkin Minutes for 1790 say "S. Fork of Holston River." Semple puts St. Clair's Bottom also on the South Fork, and mentions the North Fork of Holston as a distinct church. It doubtless was in that section now known as Rye Valley in Smith County.

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the Dutchman's Creek Church took measures to have Elder Barlow "come down" to help in the administration of the Lord's Supper. The Beaver Creek Church continued in the Yadkin Association until 1797 when it was dismissed to join in the formation of the Mountain Association. Its first named delegates were John Barlow, John Durham, and Patrick Money; for other years the delegates named were: 1793, John Barlow and Wm. Lansdown; for 1794, the same with the addition of Patrick Money; for 1796, Barlow, Lansdown, and Lewis Carlton; for 1797, Barlow, Lansdown and John Durham. In Asplund's 1791 *Register*, which statement confirms the accuracy of Greene's, the church was reported as having 30 members, with John Barlow as pastor. It has always been a progressive church and today is a member of the Brushy Mountain Association and has about 150 members.

Mitchell's River was the name of another church that was represented in the formation of the Yadkin Association in 1790, and again the next year, when its delegates were Elder Moses Foley and William Ramey. After this, the name "Mitchell's River" does not appear in the minutes until 1821 when three "newly constituted" churches, one of which was Mitchell's River, were received into membership. That particular church joined in forming the Brier Creek Association, November 23, 1822, when its delegates were Stephen Potter, John Marsh, and Gideon Potter. Its name does not appear in the minutes of the Brier Creek Association for 1855, and it was probably one of the churches which "rent themselves in disorder" from that association about that time. Asplund, in the 1791 edition, located Mitchell's River Church in Wilkes County with Moses Foley as itinerant minister, and gave the number of its members as 27. In his fifth edition, however, he listed under the name "Fish's River" the same statistics. In 1791,

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at the occasional meeting in December, the minutes of the Yadkin Association show that *Fishes River* was represented, William Ramey, delegate; in 1793 *Fish River* was listed with Elder Moses Foley and Abraham James as delegates. After 1793 the records do not show that either Mitchell's River, Fishes River, or Fish River was represented at a meeting of the Association until 1821, when the "newly constituted" Mitchell's River was admitted.

Two other churches of Wilkes County which were represented in the 1790 organizational meeting of the Yadkin Association were Roaring River and the South Fork of Roaring River. According to Asplund, fifth edition, the former was constituted in 1799, and the number of its members for the four years 1790-1793 were, in order, 33, 30, 26, and 30; John Turner was its pastor. The latter was constituted in 1785, and its members for the years 1790-1793 numbered, in order, 100, 127, 147, and 150. Its ministers were William Hammond, pastor, and William Morgan, licentiate. The former, Roaring River, was represented in the December, 1791, meeting of the Association by Thomas Lawrence; in 1794, under the name of East Fork of Roaring River, it was again represented by Thomas Lawrence, together with John Turner and Abraham Mitchell; in 1795, by John Lawrence and Abraham Mitchell; in 1796, by John Cate and Abraham Mitchell; in 1797, by Thomas Lawrence; in 1800, by Timothy Bullery; in 1802 by Reuben Sparks and Samuel Arnold; in 1803 by Reuben Sparks and James Maynard; in 1804 by Reuben Sparks and Thomas Lawrence; and by them again in 1805 and 1811, having, so far as the records show, been unrepresented in the intervening years; in 1816, by John Sparks; in 1820 by Thomas Douglas, R. Sparks, and E. Richardson, when it had 25 members; in 1821 by Thomas Douglas, T. Stalcup (?), and R. Sparks. In 1822 it was dismissed to join

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with other churches to form the Brier Creek Association. Its messengers for that purpose were Thomas Douglas and Elisha Richardson.<sup>13</sup>

The South Fork of Roaring River was located somewhere on a small stream which flows into the main stream from the west. Its pastor, Elder William Hammond, was appointed a delegate to the Strawberry Association in 1788 and again in 1790. Its delegates to the Yadkin Association were as follows: October, 1791: William Hammond, Walter Brown, Roaling Judd; 1793: William Hammond, R. Judd, A. Phillips, J. Meredith; 1795: For Mulberry and Roaring River, William Morgan; 1796: John Forister; 1797: Jacob McGready, Fielding Forester. This church seems to have been closely connected with the Mulberry Church of Joseph Murphy, of which account is given above. When one had delegates to the Association the other did not, and the names of the delegates of the one are also in the list of the names from the other, and neither was represented after 1797. In the minutes of the Mountain Association for 1846 and 1847 Mulberry Church is listed as one of the churches. This was not the church once located on the site of Wilkesboro, but another church further to the north, probably on the east side of Mulberry Creek. The South Fork of Roaring River Church joined the Roaring River Association in 1847.

One of the most active churches in the formation of the Yadkin Association and in its early activities was that of Brier Creek. Its pastor, Elder John Cleveland, was the moderator at its first meeting as a branch association in 1786, and the pastor who succeeded him, Elder William Petty, was its moderator 1787-1795, except for the years 1791, when another pastor of the same church, Elder

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<sup>13</sup> Foote, *Brier Creek Association*, p. 199. The name of the church is in the list of the churches of the Mountain District Association for 1845. In 1846, one of its delegates was William R. Sparks; in 1847, Colby Sparks, Jonas Sparks, and A. Johnson. In 1847 a new association by the name of Roaring River was formed, which continued until 1871.



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Andrew Baker, was moderator, and 1794, when the celebrated Elder John Gano acted as moderator after Petty's voluntary giving-up of the office. It was represented at nearly all the meetings of the Association. Its delegates, so far as given, were: October, 1791: Andrew Baker, John Profit; 1793: George McNeil and Andrew Baker; 1794: Benjamin Martin, John Parks, George McNeil; 1795: George McNeil and Benjamin Martin; 1796: Wm. Dotson, Benjamin Martin, George McNeil; 1800: Joel Had, Sterling Rose; 1802: Humphrey Cockrum, Andrew Canady, Thomas Durham; 1803: Thomas Mastin, Benjamin Martin, Richard Connagan; 1804: Thomas Mastin, Benjamin Martin, Andrew Canady; 1805: Thomas Mastin, Richard Cunningham, Benjamin Martin; 1811: Thomas Mastin, William Guillian; 1815: Thomas Mastin, William Guillian; 1816: Thomas Mastin, William Guillian, Benjamin Martin; 1817: Thomas Mastin, William Guillian, N. Martin; 1818: Thomas Mastin, William Guillian; 1819: T. Mastin, William Guillian, Benjamin Martin; 1820: Thomas Mastin, Jno. Martin, Jno. Johnson; 1821: T. Mastin, W. Guillian, W. King. In 1822 the church was dismissed to join in forming the Brier Creek Association.

From an excellent sketch, made by Miss Mattie E. Sale from the records of the Brier Creek Baptist Church, which was published in the *Winston-Salem Journal* of July 2, 1933, we learn that it was constituted with eleven members on July 8, 1783. The ministers who assisted were Elders Lewis Shelton, George McNeil and John Cleveland. Its first clerk was Richard Allen, who served until 1824, a period of forty-one years. He was also clerk of the Yadkin Association, 1787-1789. Among the original members were Benjamin Martin, who lived within one mile of the church, and whose descendants have been prominent in that region and known for their interest in church work, some Baptists, some Episcopalians, (Greene), and John Parks, from a

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family still connected with the Brier Creek Church. Among its pastors have been Elders John Cleveland, Andrew Baker, Thomas Mastin, who became the first moderator of the Brier Creek Association on its organization on November 23, 1822. Other pastors were Elders Jesse Adams and his son, W. F. Adams, the father serving for twenty years from December 27, 1828, and the son twenty-seven years from November 28, 1852, and at his death left \$1,500 for the upkeep of the church. Thomas Foster served the church as clerk for thirty-one years from 1852, and was succeeded in 1883 by George W. Sale, who held the position until his death, June 14, 1930, forty-seven years. Elder N. T. Jarvis, "Outstanding rural minister of northwestern North Carolina" (Miss Sale), served the church as pastor until 1939, a period of thirty-six years. The Yadkin Association met with Brier Creek in 1789, 1791 (April), 1794, 1804, 1816.

New River and North Fork of New River were also listed as churches represented at the organization of the Yadkin Association on August 28, 1790. Asplund in 1791 lists New River with twenty-eight members, Theophilus Evans, pastor, and North Fork of New River with thirty-five members and without pastor. In his fifth edition, however, the statistics are slightly different, showing for the North Fork, for which he now gives the date of constitution as 1781, only fifteen members for the year 1790. New River is not listed as such, but there appears Three Forks of New River, organized in 1791, James Chambers, pastor, and James Tompkins, licentiate. After 1790 in the records of the Yadkin Association reference is not again made to "New River" but to "Three Forks of New River" and "North Fork of New River." Of the Three Forks Church, J. P. Arthur, in his excellent *Western North Carolina, a History*, says:<sup>14</sup>

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It was organized November 6, 1790. The following is from its

<sup>14</sup> Page 223.

records: "A book containing (as may be seen) in the covenant and conduct of the Baptist church of Jesus Christ in Wilkes County, . . . New River, Three Forks settlement" by the following members: James Tomkins, Richard Greene and wife, Daniel Eggers and wife, William Miller, Elinor Greene and B. B. Eggers. "This is the mother of all the Baptist churches throughout this great mountain region. From this mother church, using the language of these old pioneers, they established 'arms' of the mother church; one at what is now known as the Globe in Caldwell County, another to the westward, known as Ebenezer, one to the northeast named South Fork . . . and at various other points."

G. W. Greene, who also had seen the records, agrees with this statement. It would seem evident then, that this "Three Forks of New River" was not one of the churches that met at Flat Rock Church on August 28, 1790, several months before the date of constitution shown in its records, and had part in the formation of the Yadkin Association. It continued, however, under the name of Three Forks of New River, and was later known simply as Three Forks. After some wavering in the days of division, this church finally came out as a missionary church, and has long been one of the most progressive in the State. It remained only a few years in the Yadkin Association. Its delegates, so far as given, were: October, 1791: Richard Green, Daniel Eggers; 1793: James Chambers, Ebenezer Fairchilds; 1794: James Chambers, James Tomkins; 1795: James Chambers, James Tomkins; 1797: George McNeill, John Ferguson. In 1795, this church was dismissed, but continued for two years longer to meet with the Association. It was one of the constituent churches in the formation of the Mountain Association, in which it remained until the formation of the Three Forks Association about 1840, to which it gave its name.<sup>15</sup>

The North Fork of New River had as its delegates: in 1791: William Adkins, James Bunyard, Samuel Marsh;

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<sup>15</sup> See Historical Appendix to the Minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1840 by Elder A. J. Greene.

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1793: Jesse Bowlen, Jonathan Smith, Sam Tindle (?); 1796: James Bunyard; 1797: Thomas Callaway, John Smith. This church seems to have been near the Virginia line, and as churches were at this period often building on new sites, it is possible that this one had its meeting house at one time in Virginia and another in North Carolina. The Ashe Association of the present day has both a New River Church and one by the name of Three Forks, while the Alleghany Association has a church called New River. It is probable that one or both of the Ashe County churches are connected in some way with the ancient church, which Semple lists as a Virginia Church of the Mountain Association, and gives the date of its constitution as 1796, probably a reconstitution.

The above were the fourteen churches that had delegates at the meeting at Eaton's Church in Rowan (now Davie) County when the Association became an independent body, but several other churches were represented in the association meetings before and after that time. One of these was the church called Little Yadkin, of which some account has been given above. In October, 1791, a new church admitted was Little River. Though there are a score of streams called Little River in North Carolina, and a dozen Baptist churches of that name, the name of the pastor, Elder John Swaim, who was one of the delegates of that year, makes it certain that this church was that now a member of the Alexander Association and was located in the northwestern part of Alexander County.<sup>16</sup> Always active, it remained in the Yadkin Association until the formation of the Brier Creek Association in 1822, when, with Elder John Swaim as one of its delegates, it joined in the formation of that body. In October, 1791, Eaton's Church, under the name of Dutchman's Creek, which in December, 1790, was con-

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<sup>16</sup> Greene, "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 78, places this church in Alexander County.



stituted as an independent church, had its first delegates at a meeting of the Association; these were Andrew Hunt and Thomas Easteb. Some account of this church has also been given above. In 1793, four churches were first represented, two in North Carolina and two in Virginia. The North Carolina churches were the Forks of Yadkin, which had been constituted or reconstituted in 1793, and the Bear Creek Church. Of these important churches we have already had some account. In the Association of 1793 the Forks Church was represented by its pastor, Elder Benjamin Buckner, and Elijah Owen; Bear Creek was represented by its pastor, Elder William Cook, and James Campbell and John Beaman. The Fork Church is now a member of the South Yadkin Association, Bear Creek of the Yadkin. The two Virginia churches were the church then known as Cedar Island but later as Ausburn, and later still as Fox Creek, and the church known as Sinclair's Bottom, or Holston River, or South Fork of Holston. Some account of both churches may be found in Semple.<sup>17</sup> Fox Creek was in Grayson County. It was constituted in 1782, and its first pastor was Elder Theophilus Evans, who with Zach. Wells were its delegates to the Association of 1793. Later it became a member of the Mountain Association. According to Semple, the church of Sinclair's Bottom was in Washington County. It was constituted in 1791, and in 1810 was a member of the Holston Association and had 45 members. Semple relates that it was Elder Andrew Baker, one of the most consecrated and efficient ministers of the Yadkin Association in its early years, who saved both of these churches from the demoralization into which they had fallen.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 275 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, p. 275 f. South Fork, or St. Clair's Bottom, after years without a pastor "really flourished," when the church had chosen Elder Andrew Baker for that place. "Fox Creek was at first a flourishing church, but their preacher

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In 1794 two churches, both in Wilkes County, joined the Association. These were Lewis Fork and Cubb Creek. Of the latter some account has already been given. It had been a branch of Grassy Knob, and was constituted as an independent church in May, 1793. It afterwards had a hard struggle for existence, and was once, in 1818, reported dissolved but, perhaps with some period of intermission, has continued and is now an active church of the Brushy Mountain Association.<sup>19</sup> Lewis Fork, situated on the stream of that name in Wilkes County, was organized as an arm of Brier Creek Church on May 19, 1792, and as an independent church with 24 members in May, 1794. Its early pastors were: Elders Andrew Baker, 1792-1794; George McNeil, 1795; James McCaleb, 1800. It withdrew from the Association in 1825; the Lewis Fork Association, organized in 1836, took its name from this church. It continues to this day as one of the stronger churches of the Brushy Mountain Association.<sup>20</sup>

In 1794 two other churches also became members of the Association. These were Mulberry, of which something has been said in connection with the church of South Roaring River, with which it seems to have been closely associated, and Buffalo, with James Bunyard and Isaac Weaver as delegates. Probably Buffalo is the same as the North Fork of New River, since the later is not named in the list of churches in the minutes of 1794, while the name of Buffalo Church is not found again in the minutes, and John Bunyard was the delegate from the North Fork of New River in 1796. A church named Buffalo is at present a member of the Ashe Association.

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becoming disorderly and eventually excluded, they fell into confusion and distress. The removal of Elder Andrew Baker among them, in 1803, under God healed all their backslidings. God turned their mourning into joy, by turning many to righteousness. For several years Mr. Baker had the gratification to see his Master's work prosper in his hands."

<sup>19</sup> Minutes of the Yadkin Association and Bear Creek Church.

<sup>20</sup> Eller, *In Memoriam*, p. 10 f.

No new churches are named in the minutes of 1795 and 1796, but in 1797 the name of Middle Little River appears in the list of churches, its delegates being William Shurel (Sherill) and Ben Alston. Possibly, it had its delegates at other meetings of the Association in those years in which no list of churches is given, but it is not named again until 1805, when its delegates were Moses (Thomas) Freeman and Nat Austeb. The names of the delegates would indicate that it was located on the Middle Little River in the western part of the present Alexander County.

Another meeting house mentioned in the minutes is that of Deep Ford "on Ready's River, Wilkes County," where the Association met in 1792. This was not a regularly constituted church, but an arm which was probably later constituted as Reddie's River Baptist Church, which about 1840 became a member of the Lewis Fork Association.

Two other churches in this territory which were organized before 1797 never became members of the Yadkin Association. One was King's Creek in the edge of the present Caldwell County, near the Wilkes line. It was organized in 1779, and later became a member of Catawba River Association. The other church was the famous Globe Church of Caldwell County. It was organized in 1796 with members partly from the Head of Yadkin Church and partly from the New River. It was a member of the Mountain Association and later of the Catawba and later still of the Caldwell Association. Probably there were several other churches in this territory which never joined any association.

Before 1797 the twenty-five to thirty churches of the Yadkin Association were scattered through fifteen counties of North Carolina and through several in Virginia. The territory of this association was much too large for its effective functioning. This was recognized almost from the beginning. The Association of 1790 was at Eaton's Meeting House; that of 1791 at Brier Creek, both in the eastern

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part of the territory. As it was now holding two sessions a year, one in April and the other in October, it was agreed that only one associational meeting be held each year, but that the next be at Lower Creek (Allen's, or Bennett's Old Meeting House) in Burke (now Caldwell) County and "downward to Eaton's Meeting House in Rowan County." This decision was not pleasing to some of the more distant churches, and in 1793 the church in Grayson County, Virginia, and Cedar Island asked that the plan of having two associational meetings a year be re-established. The Association did not agree to this but voted to hold three quarterly meetings in addition to the associational annual meeting each year, one in the upper or western district, another in the middle district and the third in the lower or eastern district. The quarterly meetings were to serve for preaching and communion (not the Lord's Supper) and so forth, the annual meeting was for business. It was further agreed that the "next Association be held at Brier Creek in Wilkes County, on the fourth Saturday in August next; the first Quarter Meeting to be held at Cedar Island on the 4th Saturday in November, next. The second Quarter, at Jersey Settlement, the 4th Saturday in February; the third and last Quarter at Rye Valley on the Holston, the 4th Saturday in May." Quarterly meetings were appointed also for the year 1794-1795, but none for 1795-1796 nor thereafter. It was time for a division of the Association and this was effected at the meeting held at Beaver Creek Church in October, 1797. The first meeting of the Mountain Association was appointed for Three Forks of New River for the Saturday before the second Sunday in August, 1798, and two of the ablest and most trusted ministers of the churches remaining in the old Yadkin, Elders William Cook and Lazarus Whitehead, were appointed to attend that meeting.



At this point it may be well to indicate what were the trends in doctrine and activities of the churches that were now divided into two associations.

As we have seen above, the first Baptist preachers in this section and the first Baptists were Separate Baptists and came under the impulse of the movement started by Shubal Stearns at Sandy Creek. Later as a result of the persecutions of the Regulators many members of the Separate Baptist churches and their preachers went to the Watauga, Alexander County and the Holston River regions and established Baptist churches. Particular (Regular) Baptists came also; the church at Dutchman's Creek, constituted in 1772, was of the Regular Baptist order. Already, however, in this section both preachers and churches were disregarding the distinction of Separate and Regular and were laboring together to give the gospel to the pioneer settlers. The Separates were sometimes classed as Arminian in doctrine, since their preachers said little about election and free grace and much about the Holy Spirit; the Regular Baptist preachers were regarded as Calvinists because at times they talked about God's free grace and accepted the Philadelphia Association Declaration of Faith, in name at least. In reality most preachers of both groups were evangelistic, and with zeal like that of Shubal Stearns were going through all the section west of the Yadkin preaching the gospel of salvation and gathering their converts into churches. As they differed only in name, it was argued that the Baptists of this section, and all other Baptists, should be willing to drop all distinguishing names and be known simply as Baptists, which was all that most Baptists supposed the terms of union adopted by the Dover Conference in 1787 committed them to. The reluctance of the Separate Baptists in that meeting to accept the terms of union and the method by which their acceptance was gained and the union effected

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is well told by Fristoe and Semple.<sup>21</sup> In view of the far-reaching effects of this compromise and union on the development and harmony of the Baptists of North Carolina, I am giving Fristoe's account, which was first published in the year 1808.

The Regular Baptists were jealous of the Separate Baptists, because, as yet, they never formed or adopted any system of doctrine, or made a confession of faith, more than verbally; and it was thought unreasonable, that if they differed from all other denominations, which they should not in a fair, open and candid manner, make known their principles to the world, and in so doing act as children of the light; and on the other hand the Separate Baptists supposed the adopting of a confession of faith would only shackle them; that it would lead to formality and deadness, and divert them from the Bible; but upon a more intimate acquaintance, the imaginary conjectures were in some measure removed, and their hearts softened with affection towards each other; for upon close conversation and frequently hearing each other preach, it was found that they agreed in sentiment, held forth the same important doctrines, and administered the gospel ordinances in the same manner, and of course (were) children of the same family, the differences being only in name. For these reasons the parties (especially the better informed) wished for a removal of all differences, and an union to take place. In order to bring about this union, letters and messengers were sent at different times from the one to the other, and propositions made for the accommodation of the differences between them; but not with the success that was desired, until the year 1787, at Dover Meeting House, on James River, at which time the messengers for the several district associations agreed to adopt the regular Baptist confession of faith, in the manner following.

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<sup>21</sup> Fristoe, *Ketockton Association*, p. 21; Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of Baptists in Virginia*, pp. 74 f. This compromise was maneuvered by Elder William Fristoe, who in exultation of what he truly regarded as a great victory, on October 3 of the same year, 1787, as the messenger of the Virginia Association, reported it to the Philadelphia Association, meeting in New York. The full account of it in the *Minutes of the Philadelphia Association* is as follows: At Page 227: "First, That a happy union has taken place between the Regular and Separate Baptists in Virginia; of which we also had information by a letter from our Brother John Leland, by order of the committee of Regular and Separate Baptists. In this union we sincerely rejoice." At page 233, after *The Plan of Union*, which is given at the end of Fristoe's account quoted in the text, is found the statement: "N. B. This union respects all the Baptists below the Alleghany, and does not affect those on the Western waters."

After a good deal of deliberating respecting the utility of a confession of faith, we do agree to adopt the Regular Baptist confession of faith; but to prevent its usurping a tyranical power over the consciences of any, we do not mean that every person is bound to the strict observance of everything therein contained, yet that it holds forth the essential truth of the gospel and the doctrine of salvation by Christ, and free and unmerited grace alone, which ought to be believed by every Christian, and maintained by every minister of the Gospel; and that from henceforth the word Regular and Separate, be buried in Oblivion, and that we be known in the future by the United Baptist Church of Christ, in Virginia. This was signed by the Moderator and Clerk, and confirmed by the different associations, at the return of their messengers.

Such is the account of Fristoe. He does not tell, however, as he reported to the Philadelphia Association, that it was only Baptists to the east of the Blue Ridge that accepted the plan of union. It is evident that at the time Fristoe won the co-operation of the learned Philadelphia Baptists and a general plan was devised for bringing all Baptist churches and associations to acceptance of the Philadelphia Confession as an authoritative statement of Baptist doctrines. The details are not known. Evidently, however, it was recognized that the Philadelphia Confession, most of it taken from the Westminster Confession, and a product of the learned Presbyterian divines of England, was too long and confusing a document to be understood by many of the members of Baptist churches. For the present purpose a briefer and simpler statement was needed—an “abstract of Baptist principles.” This was soon produced, and widely circulated. A copy of it appears in Asplund’s *Baptist Register* for 1790-1791, only three years later, which, with introduction, reads as follows:

*An abstract of principles held by the Baptists in general, agreeable to the confession of faith adopted by upwards of one hundred congregations in England, and published in Philadelphia, 1742; which is as a standard for the Baptists.*

“1. We believe in only one true and living God; and that there

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are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"2. We believe that the scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.

"3. We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election.

"4. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.

"5. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will ability.

"6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the imputed righteousness of Christ.

"7. We believe that God's elect shall be called, converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

"8. We believe that the saints shall persevere in grace, and never fall finally away.

"9. We believe that baptism and the Lord's supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the subjects of these ordinances—And we believe that the true mode of baptism is by immersion.

"10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment.

"11. We believe the punishment of the wicked will be everlasting, and the joys of the righteous will be eternal.

"12. We believe that no ministers have a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such are regularly called, and come under imposition of hands by the presbytery, &c. &c."

It will be observed that in two of the articles of this abstract the highly Calvinistic Doctrine of Election is strongly emphasized, and in another, the Arminian doctrine of Free Will is strongly repudiated. These were matters of dispute among the Baptists of North Carolina, both Separate and Regular, but their generally accepted articles of faith were only three. 1. Acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. 2. Baptism by immersion of one who has already believed. 3. The Lord's Supper only for one who has first believed and then been baptized by immersion. These were the doctrines which the Baptists of North Carolina have always accepted without troubling themselves greatly about others. Even today, on the organization of new churches, the minister in charge usually tells the members that they are expected to agree on some articles of



faith, either the Philadelphia or the New Hampshire confession, about which most of the members know only the names. The essential doctrines are the three mentioned above.

It is evident, however, that the Regular, or Calvinistic Baptists had won the victory. Their victory was twofold; first, they had secured the acceptance of the Philadelphia Confession as the common creed of all Baptists, with the provision that any reluctance to accept it in all its implications would be overlooked. Here was a printed statement of articles of Baptist belief which might be referred to at any time by any who were in doubt. It was authoritative; here was the standard yardstick by which the correctness of one's Baptist principles could be judged. Before a third of a century it had become the rule of faith and practice with many Baptist ministers and Baptist churches, for all their profession that the Bible is a sufficient rule of faith and practice.

The second part of the victory of the Regulars in the terms of union was the declaration that the Philadelphia Confession should be accepted by every Christian and that it was the duty of every preacher to preach and maintain its doctrine of salvation not only by Christ, but also *by free and unmerited grace alone*, which meant that the elect are saved and they alone, and it is impossible for any elect to be lost; on the other hand the non-elect cannot be saved, whatever efforts may be made for their salvation and however repentant they may be.<sup>22</sup>

We now return to the Yadkin Association. On its organization in 1790, the Association accepted the plan agreed upon in 1787 with little or no modification. As told in our first volume, it had been accepted by the Kehukee Association in 1788. Other Baptist associations in North Carolina

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<sup>22</sup> See the articles of faith of the Kehukee Association, Volume I of this work, p. 477.

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either never accepted it, or adopted it only with modifications that they considered necessary, sometimes with the statement of "Articles of Faith" reduced in number. The most important modifications in the earlier years were those of the Broad River Association in 1800, and of the Big Ivy Association in 1827-1828. Of each of these a fuller account will be given below. As we shall see, this was a matter which caused much dissension among the Baptists of western North Carolina, the splitting of some associations and the formation of several new associations, with the final result of greater unity and progress.



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## XV

### DIVISIONS

At the time of organization of the Yadkin Association in the year 1790 its churches were scattered over a wide extent of territory, from the Yadkin River on the east to the Tennessee line on the west, and from the Virginia line on the north to the tributaries of the Catawba River on the south. It was recognized at the time that the area was much too large for one association and plans for division were almost immediately begun. Since that time there have been divisions and subdivisions of the extensive territory and groupings of the churches to form numerous associations, many of which have been disbanded when the conditions that caused their organizations have ceased to exist. There follows a list of the associations that have existed in the territory of the original Yadkin Association, their dates of formation, and a word about the constitution of each.<sup>1</sup>

|                   |           |  |
|-------------------|-----------|--|
| 1. Yadkin         | 1790      | All the territory indicated above  |
| 2. Mountain       | 1797-1799 | For the most part of churches west of the Blue Ridge in the present counties of Ashe, Alleghany and Watauga    |
| 3. Brier Creek    | 1822      | Of churches for the most part in the southwestern corner of Wilkes   |
| 4. Abbott's Creek | 1825      | Of one Yadkin Association church and others from the Sandy Creek Association                                   |
| 5. Catawba River  | 1827      | With a part of its churches north of the Catawba River and in the original territory of the Yadkin Association |

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<sup>1</sup> Fletcher, *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 15, writing in 1935, says: "Today there are twenty-two Baptist associations." He does not give the names of the associations he had in mind.

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|                           |                 |  |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 6. Fisher's River         | 1831            | A Primitive Association, mostly in Stokes County, to which one of the churches of the Yadkin Association deflected |
| 7. Lewis Fork             | 1835            | Wilkes and Alexander counties  |
| 8. Three Forks            | 1841            | Churches in the present counties of Watauga and Ashe that had previously belonged to the Mountain Association      |
| 9. Roaring River          | 1847            | Churches for the most part east of the Blue Ridge in Wilkes County—a Primitive Baptist Association                 |
| 10. Jefferson             | 1848            | Ashe County  |
| 11. Taylorsville          | 1851            | Churches in Alexander, Wilkes, Ashe and Caldwell—a Temperance and Missionary Association, existing only until 1862 |
| 12. Lower Creek           | 1852            | Of a few churches in the territory of the stream of that name  |
| 13. Senter                | 1853            | Ashe County, a Primitive Baptist Association   |
| 14. United Baptist        | 1859            | Of churches of Taylorsville, Lewis Fork and Lower Creek associations   |
| 15. Mountain Union        | 1867            | Of Primitive Baptist churches  |
| 16. Stony Fork            | 1869<br>(?1862) | Wilkes and Watauga counties, formed of churches from the Mountain Union Association                                |
| 17. Primitive Baptist     | 1869            | Ashe, Alleghany and Wilkes counties  |
| 18. New River             | 1870            | Of churches in Ashe and Alleghany counties in North Carolina and in Virginia                                       |
| 19. Brushy Mountain       | 1872            | Mostly of churches of the Taylorsville and Lewis Fork associations   |
| 20. South Yadkin          | 1873            | Of churches in Davie and Iredell counties  |
| 21. Elkin                 | 1879            | Partly of churches of the old "Primitive Association," Wilkes and Surry counties                                   |
| 22. Caldwell              | 1885            | Caldwell County  |
| 23. Pilot Mountain        | 1885            | Of Stokes County churches  |
| 24. Ashe and Alleghany    | 1886            | Of North Carolina churches formerly belonging to New River Association   |
| 25. Alexander             | 1887            | Alexander County   |
| 26. Ashe                  | 1897            | Formed on the division of the Ashe and Alleghany Association   |
| 27. Alleghany and Grayson | 1897            | Formed on the division of the Ashe and Alleghany Association of churches in Alleghany County and Virginia          |
| 28. Stone Mountain        | 1897            | Successor to the Primitive Association   |



## DIVISIONS

|               |      |  |
|---------------|------|--|
| 29. Surry     | 1903 | Surry County   |
| 30. Alleghany | 1909 | Formed of the Alleghany County churches from the Alleghany and Grayson Association |
| 31. Rowan     | 1928 | Rowan County   |

Neither the names nor the number of the associations have remained constant, and statements about them or references to them are often misunderstood and confusing. It is hoped that the following account of them may be helpful.

As already said, the territory of the Yadkin Association was too large and the churches too widely scattered for one association to be most effective, and plans for division began very early. These plans had matured when the Yadkin Association met at Beaver Creek<sup>2</sup> in the upper edge of Wilkes County in October, 1797, and voted that the Yadkin Association "be divided into two distinct Associations, and the bounds between them shall be as follows, (that is to say) the upper District to be known by the name of the Mountain Association and to include Lewis Fork, Beaver Creek, Head of the Yadkin, the Globe churches for the eastern bounds, and the said Mountain Association be held at the Three Forks of New River on the Saturday before the second Sunday in August next, and the Yadkin Association to be held at the Fork Church in Rowan County on the Saturday before the fourth Sunday in September next."<sup>3</sup> According to Fletcher, the constituent churches of the Mountain Association were: Rye Valley, New River, North Fork of New River, Fish River, South Fork of Roaring River, Beaver Creek, Head of Yadkin, Cedar Island, Three

<sup>2</sup> This church continues to this day and is presently a member of the Brushy Mountain Association; in 1891 a church of the same name was admitted to the Ashe Association.

<sup>3</sup> The above account from the Minutes of the Yadkin Association for 1797, indicates that the plan of the division into two associations was formed and agreed to at the meeting of the Yadkin Association in 1797, and that the Mountain Association first met in regular session in August, 1798. In his *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, Rev. J. F. Fletcher gives 1799 as the date of the formation of Mountain Association, but does not tell how he fixed on that date.

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Forks and St. Clair's Bottom. Not all of these churches, however, left the Yadkin Association upon the formation of the Mountain Association. Some were dismissed when the dividing line became the Blue Ridge Mountains, the churches of the new Mountain Association being in the territory of the present counties of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga. Of the associations formed from the churches of the Mountain Association some account will be found below.

In 1800, the Yadkin Association dismissed the Catawba River Church to join "another association," doubtless the Broad River, which Elder Ambrose Carlton, pastor of Smyrna Church in the territory of the Catawba Church, and probably at that time its main branch, helped to organize in 1800.

The territory of the Yadkin Association was diminished further in 1818 when the Jersey Church withdrew to join with other churches, for the most part churches of the Sandy Creek Association, in the Pee Dee Association. Since that time the Yadkin has had no church east of the Yadkin River.

In 1822, the old association suffered a further loss of territory and churches on the withdrawal of nine of its churches in the southeastern corner of Wilkes County to join in the formation of the Brier Creek Association, which remains to this day, a vigorous and progressive body. The churches which withdrew at this time were: Brier Creek, Bethel, Fishing Creek, Little River, Mitchell's River, Snow Creek, Roaring River, Zion Hill, and Cool Spring.

In 1827, five churches in Burke (now Caldwell) County, *viz.*, Head of Yadkin, King's Creek, Globe, Lower Creek, and Union, joined with other churches in the formation of the Catawba River Association. Of these, there is record of Head of Yadkin, Lower Creek and Union having belonged to the Yadkin Association, but, as already told, the

first was dismissed to join in the formation of the Mountain Association; Union, together with Lewis Meeting House, was dismissed in 1825. There is no record of Lower Creek having been represented at the meetings of the Association for years prior to this time. In 1854 the remaining Baptist churches in Caldwell County joined in the organization of an association called Lower Creek, and the Yadkin Association no longer had a representative from that county.<sup>4</sup>

In 1835, the Yadkin Association dismissed other churches which formed the Lewis Fork Association. Its churches numbered at first only eight, but soon there were twenty-four in the Association, mainly in Alexander and the upper end of Wilkes County.

In 1852, the Taylorsville Association was organized and probably gathered into its membership all the Baptist churches in Alexander County. The Brushy Mountain Association, made up of some of the former Lewis Fork churches and of the United Baptist Association churches, nearly all in Wilkes County, was organized in 1872. In 1879, a few other churches in Wilkes joined in the formation of the Elkin Association. Four churches in Surry County were dismissed in 1903 to join in the formation of

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<sup>4</sup>G. W. Greene, in "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 61 f., says at p. 71, that after the formation of the Mountain Association, "Some of the Caldwell churches joined the Broad River Association." The minutes of the Yadkin Association have no record of the dismissal before 1825 of any Burke (Caldwell) County church except the Catawba River Church, which, as stated above, was one of the churches which joined in the organization of the Broad River Association. The Silver Creek Church in Burke County was a constituent member of that association, but it was a "new church" and had not previously been a member of any association. Such in part is the account given by Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*. Major W. A. Graham, *The History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 43, says: "It will be noted that all the Broad River churches, except Smyrna, which was six miles distant, were on the southern side of the Catawba River, or within one mile of the river (New Bethany and North Catawba), showing that, with one exception, the river had been observed as the boundary of the Broad River Association."

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the Surry Association. Since that time the Yadkin Association has had no churches north of Yadkin County. In 1873 came the organization of the South Yadkin Association which included in its membership the Baptist churches, former members of the Yadkin Association, in the counties of Davie, Iredell and Rowan. Today the boundaries of the Yadkin Association are the same as those of the county of Yadkin.

Such is the account in brief of the dismissal of churches from the Yadkin Association to form other associations or to join associations already formed. There follows some account of the associational development in this area, beginning with the Mountain Association.

The territory of the Mountain Association, established in 1797-1799, was chiefly that west of the Blue Ridge in the present counties of Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga. According to Rev. J. F. Fletcher:<sup>5</sup>

From the date of its organization in 1799, . . . the Mountain Association, coming into existence the same year that Ashe County was cut off from Wilkes County and established as a separate county, experienced satisfactory growth and development, adding new churches almost every year and increasing constantly in membership. I am unable to follow the development in detail for the reason that no minutes of the association's meetings are available until 1838. We know that the association's growth had been marvelous, for in 1840 it was strong enough to give off enough churches to form the Three Forks Association and still have 24 churches left with more than 1,000 members. From the stories that have come down to us from our fathers and mothers, we know that many strong preachers had been called of God to labor in this field and that their labors had been abundantly blessed.

Fletcher also makes the following statement:<sup>6</sup>

(The churches were) Rye Valley, New River, North Fork of New River, Fish River, South Fork of Roaring River, Beaver Creek,

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<sup>5</sup> *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 15.



Head of Yadkin, Cedar Island, Three Forks, St. Clair's Bottom. The first and last named were in Virginia. Cedar Island later became known as Fox Creek Church.

Except for Fish River, the churches named are the same as those named in the minutes of the Yadkin Association as having applied for letters of dismission that they might join in the formation of the new body. In the footnote is given Fletcher's further statement with reference to these churches, which, while partly traditional, doubtless represents the religious conditions in the region west of the Blue Ridge at the time.<sup>7</sup>

For the years before 1838, because of lack of minutes, our information about the Mountain Association is scant, but from the records of other associations we learn that its

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<sup>7</sup> *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 15 f.: "Every one of these old churches became a center of missionary effort. Located at strategic points, they began to reach out into the country surrounding them, bringing into their membership the leading men and women of the time and from every one of these churches, two and three and even more churches grew and were set apart for the service of God. At this time, between 1790 and 1799, no other denomination was represented in all this vast territory by an organized church, association, conference or presbytery, and few of them had any preacher in the territory. Occasionally, a Methodist minister made his appearance in this territory for a brief period of time, but only for a brief period.

"The zeal of those early Baptist ministers, McNeill, Baker and others, has scarcely been equalled in the annals of our church. The world has seen no such religious crusaders since the saints of the early days 'went everywhere, preaching the word.' These men did not wait until a 'living' was assured to them. They did not wait until they found out if there were good roads and a good church building, with a comfortable parsonage, and good schools for their children. They did not even stop to inquire if the people among whom they were going could house them comfortably, give them a featherbed to sleep on and provide ham, eggs and chicken for breakfast. Believing in the promises of the Master, they took no thought of the morrow, but responded to God's call, going wheresoever there was human need.

"It is difficult for us to picture in our minds the conditions faced by these heroic men of God. Accustomed as we are to good roads and easy communication, we think nothing of a journey of a hundred miles or more in three hours and it is difficult for us to realize that in those days the preacher reached his scattered congregations by travelling afoot or on horseback, over devious trails made by Indians and hunters. He found his people living in log huts, usually of one room, and subsisting on rye bread, potato soup and bacon, varied occasionally with game from the forests. At that time, no corn was grown in the sparse and straggly clearings for the reason that no variety of corn had been developed that would ripen in this territory during the comparative short growing season."

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activities were the same as those of other Baptist associations. As early as 1825 it was in correspondence with the Broad River Association, and in that year and again in 1826 its messenger to the Broad River was Elder Reuben Coffee, pastor of the Globe Church, who in 1827 was the moderator of the Catawba River Association at its organizational meeting held November 16, 1827, at the Head of the Yadkin Church, which, along with the churches of Lower Creek and Union had been variously reported, sometimes as members of the Yadkin Association and again as churches of the Mountain Association. As may be seen in Elder E. A. Poe's *Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Association*, published in 1867, the two associations, Mountain and Catawba River, came into correspondence on the formation of the new association and continued that relation until 1837. Elder Poe gives the names of the messengers from the Mountain Association for the different years, nearly all of them Baptist ministers of prominence. The list is as follows: 1828, James Vannoy and William Kendal; 1829, Drury Senter; 1830, none named; 1831, D. McBride and D. Farthing; 1832, D. McBride and D. Farthing; 1833, H. Posey; 1834, a letter and minutes by the hands of Wm. Kendal; 1835, Elder Davis Tinsley; 1836, no record; 1837, Elder Richard Jacks and B. McBride, and Bro. D. Farthing. After 1837, though the names of messengers from other associations to the Catawba River regularly continued to be given, none is reported from the Mountain Association, which in 1838 became anti-missionary.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The following from Poe's *Historical Sketch*, p. 3 f., shows that the Mountain Association in 1834 was not in agreement with the Catawba River Association in regard to prescribing restrictions on the civil rights of ministers: "The following resolution was unanimously passed by the (Catawba River) Association: *Resolved*, That we believe our sister, the Mountain Association, has transcended the limits of an advisory council in answering in the negative the following query: Is it right for a minister of the gospel to hold a commission of profit?"

The first minutes of the Mountain Association that came into the hands of its historian, Rev. J. F. Fletcher, were those for the year 1838. It is a sad condition that those minutes reveal. In 1836 the Mountain Association had declared itself an anti-missionary body, and not content with that, in 1838 instituted a clever scheme designed to make anti-missionary also all other associations with which it was in correspondence, which other associations were expected to share with the Mountain Association in the unholy work of making their individual churches anti-missionary, and hostile to the "institutions of the day,"—state conventions, missionary societies, Bible societies, tract societies, Sunday schools, schools for the education of ministers, and, in short, all the objects of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Fletcher's account is as follows:<sup>9</sup>

... On page three of the minutes of the Mountain Association for 1838, there is this request from Bear Creek Church:

"Our church unanimously requests that the Association will not meddle with the missionary business so as to break any fellowship or make any division among the churches."

The association appointed a committee to consider this request and make report on it, the committee consisting of Elders Drewry Senter, and Brazille McBride, and Brethren E. Vanover, D. Tinsley and J. Calloway. The committee made this report:

"We have no authority over the churches and individuals but in answer to the request of several churches we drop correspondence with all associations at present and agree to renew it upon the following terms:

"That is, we agree to advise our churches and do advise them, to deal with any member of their body who may have trespassed against them by joining any of the institutions of the day and continue in them, causing divisions which we believe do be contrary to the whole tenor of God's word, which directs us as followers of Him, to keep the unity of the Spirit in bonds of

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<sup>9</sup> *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 17 f.

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peace, as also contrary to the principles which we as Baptists have heretofore lived under and contended for;

"Therefore, brethren, should you advise your churches to use gospel labors to detect those who are sowing seeds of discord among brethren by advocating the institutions of the day, or should you use any other means agreeable to the Word of God, to put these things from among you, we can walk together and still correspond with you as heretofore."

The report was concurred in but not without much argument and much bitterness. Two men who were present, Wiley G. Young, of Grayson County, Virginia, and Alfred Barker, of Ashe County, told me that there was a stirring debate, in which many speakers lost their tempers, and spoke harsh words. One minister, a man of commanding influence, speaking in favor of the report, exclaimed: "We are anti-missionary!"

As far as my knowledge goes, this is the first time that the term "anti-missionary" appeared in the annals of western North Carolina Baptists. Later the Baptist hosts of the State and, indeed, of the whole country were to split upon this issue and the rift, started at the meeting of the Mountain Association in 1838, grew wider and wider with the passage of the years. The associations with which the Mountain Association had been in correspondence up to this time were notified of the action of the association.

Fletcher then gives a copy of the letter sent to these associations, the one copied having been addressed to the Brier Creek Baptist Association, "a sister association indeed, for it had been formed from the old Yadkin Association."

Such is the account of action of the Mountain Association, taken, for the most part, from the minutes of the Association, by which they declared dissolution of fellowship with all their brethren who refused to accept their anti-missionary views. Since that time, more than a century now, the Mountain Association, once powerful but now relatively very weak, has been the recognized leader of the anti-missionary Baptists of western North Carolina. That readers may have a better understanding of this matter, so important in the Baptist development of that section, we are giving in the footnote the contemporary account written by Elder Richard Jacks, a missionary Baptist, whose home



was in Ashe County, and who had a part in the events of which he writes.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Fletcher, *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 43 f. (The account was first published as a circular letter in the minutes of the first session of the Jefferson Association, October 30, 1848.); "The following are a part of the reasons that led to the division between the churches that now compose the Jefferson Association, and Mountain and Three Forks Associations:

"First: In 1836 the Mountain Association while in session, assumed to itself the name and character of an Anti-Missionary Association. We being possessed of liberal principles, refused to fellowship the name and character.

"Secondly: In 1837, while in session, a motion was made to invite transient ministers to a seat, which had ever been the usual practice; but the motion was objected to; the objector was called on to make his objection known, which he did by saying: 'There were no transient ministers present except Culpepper and Freeman and they are missionaries and the Missionaries are about to erect a monument over the grave of Luther Rice which would cost from \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00.'

"The above-named brethren asked leave to reply to his erroneous statements, which was denied them. Thus they were denied liberty of speech and from having a seat, and most astonishing of all, they kept this important movement out of their minutes.

"Thirdly: In 1838, while in session, a resolution was passed dropping correspondence with all associations and advising all of their churches to deal with and put from among them all those who joined any of the 'institutions of the day,' or advocated them. This resolution was protested against at the time and they were pleaded with for equal protection, which they utterly refused to grant; in consequence of the same the Briar Creek and Lewis Fork Associations, with us, refused to submit to this resolution and rejected the correspondence of the Mountain Association, the terms upon which that association proposed to continue correspondence being such that none of the sister associations would accede to them. In 1839 there were three requests from the churches presented to the association requesting that the resolutions should be rescinded and that the correspondence of the sister associations be regained. Instead of granting the requests of the churches, to our astonishment they passed another resolution denying the express meaning of the words used in the resolution passed in 1838. Also, at this session there were two other churches that came forward from the Briar Creek Association without letter of dismission and made application for admittance into the association; the reception of these churches was objected to but the majority received them over the minority. It was then alleged that the constitution had been violated. The majority then altered the constitution so as to make the reception of these churches constitutional and after having transacted business of such vital importance to the association, refused to let it appear in their minutes.

"In 1840 the association violated her constitution by sending a committee to a church that was fully represented in the association. The church did not receive the committee because they had not asked for it.

"The last reason that we shall insert is that the Mountain Association retains in her fellowship a minister against whom charges of the most acrimonious nature have been brought and he has ever failed to acquit himself of these charges.

"We wish it distinctly understood that the Three Forks Association remained in connection with and was a component part of the Mountain

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The anti-missionary actions and declarations of the Mountain Association in 1836 and 1838 did not immediately cause any marked check in the progress of the Baptists in this mountain section, which was regarded as "marvelous" by the historian Fletcher. "Preachers and laymen, the Baptists of this territory in this period appear to have been imbued with the spirit of evangelism and they labored unceasingly for the salvation of souls." It was only after many years of violent persistence in declaring non-fellowship with all of their fellow Baptists who would not join in their opposition to missions and "the institutions of the day" that the anti-missionary leaders of the Mountain Association succeeded in driving away their more progressive brethren and in making the Mountain Association just such an organization as it has proved to be—anti-missionary and decadent in numbers, work and influence.

In the earlier years several of the ministers of the Mountain Association retained their zeal, and were faithful to bring the gospel of salvation to destitute communities. Stories of their work are recorded by Fletcher.<sup>11</sup> The

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Association until all of the foregoing acts were passed and consequently, she was accessory to these acts and she still endeavors to justify them by keeping up a correspondence with that body.

"Thus we have briefly stated some of the reasons that led to a division between the two parties. . . ."

<sup>11</sup> *History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 23, for example. "Even down to this day, people of the mountains tell stories about these preachers that have been handed down from father to son. One of these stories which has to do with Elder Enoch Reeves, who was a member of the Elk Creek Church, I have been able to verify, as far as is humanly possible without the aid of printed or written records.

"In 1849 Elder Reeves went to a private home near Reeve's Ferry, five miles south of Independence, Va., on New River, and started a meeting, preaching the first sermon on one Friday night. By Sunday night following, two little girls had presented themselves as penitents and after that, interest increased with every service and the meeting ran for three weeks. At the end of the meeting, seventy-three men, women and children were led into the river and baptized by Elder Reeves and another preacher whose name I do not remember. . . . A similar meeting was held by Elders Drury Senter and Nathaniel Senter at Piney Creek Church and at Beaver Creek Church at about this time and there were successful meetings in many parts of Ashe County, North Carolina, and in Grayson County, Virginia."

natural result of the increase in the numbers of the converted and baptized was the establishment of new churches for their service, which, because of the mountainous nature of the country, had to be very numerous, or else inaccessible to many of their members. This great increase in the number of churches brought a new problem to the Mountain Association. These new churches needed ministers and ministers were few in the Association. There were nineteen widely-scattered churches and only fourteen ministers—Elders David Cook, Drury Senter, Solomon Stamper, L. Grimsley, Nathaniel Senter, T. Carr, Enoch Reeves, George Douglass, H. Vannoy, Z. Sawyer, T. Woody, R. Kilby, T. Briniger, and L. Koontz. In this perplexing situation the Association in 1849 adopted a plan worked out by a committee which provided for the distribution of the services of the fourteen ministers among the churches; regular appointments were made for all the ministers in such a way as to cover the entire association, and these appointments were “printed in the back of the Association minutes, so that everybody would know about them. The churches were instructed to send up to the next meeting of the Association such sums of money as they desired to pay the preachers for their labors, and also to send letters stating whether they approved the plan or not.”<sup>12</sup>

The committee that made the plan, consisting of John Baker, John Gambrill, James Dickey and Alexander B. McMillan, seemingly able and progressive men, evidently supposed that it was in accord with the constitution of the Association, and the Association adopted it without recorded demur. But after a year it was found that the plan had not worked. No church took the trouble to express approval or disapproval. Fifteen of the nineteen churches sent not a cent for the purpose, heretical according to the anti-

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<sup>12</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 22, f.

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missionary doctrine, of paying the preachers for their labors, but four churches, in disregard of a practice considered sacred by the majority of Mountain Association brethren, obtained a reputation for all time by sending up contributions amounting to twenty dollars to pay the fourteen ministers for their year of labor. Of these contributions half the amount, ten dollars, came from the Piney Creek Church, five dollars from Fox Creek, three dollars from Senter Church and two dollars from Knob Fork. But pay or no pay, the fourteen ministers continued the work for another year.

In 1840, two years after its declaration of non-fellowship with all churches and associations that did not agree with it in declaring hostility to missions and the "institutions of the day," the Mountain Association dismissed ten of its churches, whose delegates on the Friday before the first Lord's day in November, 1841, met at Three Forks Church, three miles from Boone, the first church organized in the present county of Watauga, and established the Three Forks Association. At the time of its constitution it had ten churches with 450 members and seven ministers. Its clerk was Richard Gentry, of Jefferson, the former clerk of the Mountain Association.<sup>13</sup> In Dr. S. J. Wheeler's "List of Baptist Ministers in North Carolina," published in the *Proceedings* cited in the footnote, in addition to Richard Gentry, the clerk, are R. Farthing and Jacob Green definitely mentioned as ministers of the Three Fork Association. Others whose post office was Jefferson, North Carolina, and who probably served churches in the Three Forks Association, were Reese Bayless, Reuben Bayless, Jacob Briniger, A.M. (one of the very few Baptist ministers in the list who is credited with a college degree), Jonathan Faw, Jacob

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<sup>13</sup> This information is based on the "Synopsis of Baptist Association &c," in the *Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, 1842*.



Faw, Lowery Grinsley (licentiate), John Haynes, Richard Jacks, Calvin Jones, B. McBride, Enoch Rives (Reeves), Nathaniel Senter. Other statistical tables of the Convention indicate that from its early years the Three Forks was an active and progressive association. In 1843 two churches had been added, and baptisms were reported as 107, and number of members 667. In North Carolina Baptist State Convention tables Three Forks from the beginning is classed as a missionary body, but having been formed from churches dismissed from the Mountain Association, it for many years maintained friendly relations with it, its churches and their ministers, and was, therefore, regarded with suspicion by the Jefferson Association. However, after the withdrawal of some pronouncedly anti-missionary churches to join in the formation of the Roaring River Association in 1847, by degrees the Three Forks became predominantly missionary, and grew in number of churches and influence. It has been very progressive. In 1951 belonging to it were forty-four churches, all or nearly all the Baptist churches in Watauga County, with 8,146 members and 347 baptisms reported.

In few years after the Mountain Association declared its anti-missionary character, its reports, though not always clear and consistent, indicate that it had greatly increased in number of churches and number of members. Its report for 1841 shows that its churches numbered 30, its ministers 9, its church members 1,692, and baptisms 58. In 1845, after it had dismissed ten of its churches to form the Three Forks Association, it reported 24 churches, 9 ordained ministers, 61 baptisms, and 1,134 members.<sup>14</sup>

Before 1847 the Mountain Association had some churches to the east of the Blue Ridge, either proselyted churches of the former Lewis Fork Association or new churches

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<sup>14</sup> These reports are found in the tables compiled by Dr. S. J. Wheeler for the records of the *Proceedings of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina* for the years 1841-1847.

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organized by its missionaries as anti-missionary churches. The difficulties of communication between churches, some to the west and some to the east of the Blue Ridge, soon became apparent. The delegates and ministers often had to travel long distances to attend the meetings—in 1846 at Mulberry Church in the east, in 1847 at Knob Fork Church in Grayson County, Virginia—and the ministers found it all but impossible to accept charge of churches at a great distance from their homes. Seemingly with the hope of ameliorating these difficulties in 1847 the Association voted a division, making the crest of the Blue Ridge the dividing line, but with the provision that “Cranberry Union and Piney Fork churches on the west side of the Ridge, should have their choice as to which they should attach themselves.” Before the division the churches numbered 25 with about 1,280 members. Of these, the Association dismissed six, whose representatives, and probably those of other churches east of the Ridge, met at the Roaring River Church on Friday before the fourth Sunday in October, 1847, and organized the Roaring River Baptist Association, an “offspring of the Mountain Association.” In 1936 this body reported 6 churches with 134 members.<sup>15</sup>

The next association organized west of the Blue Ridge was the Jefferson, but as it was strongly missionary, it is thought best first to give some account of associations and churches closely affiliated with the Mountain Association in principle or practice, in the Primitive Baptist development in the west.

Hereafter the name “Primitive” will be used when reference is to Calvinistic Baptists not affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. As is told in the footnote, such Baptists were long in agreeing on a proper name for themselves, but for many years the common designation

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<sup>15</sup> *U. S. Census of Religious Bodies*, 1936.

for them has been "Primitive," and this is the name used in the publications of the United States Government.<sup>18</sup>

As early as 1831-1832 the anti-missionary movement came to one church of the Yadkin Association. This was the church at Deep Creek, of which some account has already been given. As we have already seen, it was organized by Elder Joseph Murphy in 1777, and had been a member of both the Sandy Creek and the Yadkin Associations. We have already seen that after the Yadkin Association in 1831 had voted strong approval of the Baptist State Convention, the Deep Creek Church schismatically rent herself from the Association, and joined with six other churches in the formation of the Fisher's River Association, a Primitive Baptist body, which, with churches mostly in Stokes County, continues to this day as one of the strongest Primitive Baptists associations in North Carolina.

In 1832 the "split," that is, the division of the churches into missionary and anti-missionary groups, came in Davidson County. The following brief account of the steps that led to this division and of the division itself is based on Sheets' *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*.

As has been told above, in the year 1818, the Yadkin As-

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<sup>18</sup> In Sheets' *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, Chapter XXIII, and again in Chapter XXXI, is given Elder Mark Bennett's contemporary account of the difficulty the Primitive brethren had in fixing on a proper name. Writing in 1854, Elder Bennett said: "The Kehukee Association has been quite unsettled and undetermined as to denominational epithet. . . . It has been missionary in her operations from the revival of missions in this country . . . to 1826. About that time two or three of her preachers drafted some 'resolutions,' in which was bespoken for their denomination the name of 'Reformed Baptists in North Carolina.' In the course of two years they became dissatisfied with this name and abandoned it. For some time they called themselves alternately 'The Old School Baptists,' 'The Old Sort of Baptists,' 'Baptists of the Old Stamp,' the 'Old Side Baptists,' etc. . . . More recently, say within twelve or eighteen months, we apprehend they are about to throw off 'Old School,' and take the name of 'Primitive Baptists.' Beginning with 1826 they had taken 'unusual pains to set the churches against missions,' and in this way acquired the designation 'anti-missionary' Baptists, which doubtless distinguished them from other Baptists." In 1952 the members of their churches often use the name "Old School Baptists," but the name "Primitive" is now the usual designation.

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sociation dismissed the Jersey Church to the Pee Dee Association for the formation of which the Sandy Creek Association in 1815 had dismissed its churches in the Abbott's Creek area. In 1825 these dismissed churches and perhaps others were formed into a new association, the Abbott's Creek Association, and the churches were working together with much enthusiasm and success. According to Sheets,<sup>17</sup> in 1829 this body met with the Jersey Church. At that time it had eleven churches, with 536 members, and during the year there had been fifty-five baptisms. "All was peace and harmony. Not one word of discontent recorded. One sentence from the Circular Letter tells the story: 'The utmost harmony, unanimity of sentiment and brotherly affection prevailed'."

It was far different at the meeting of the Abbott's Creek Association of 1832. Those Baptists who opposed missions, Sunday schools and Bible societies had been busy in the churches of the Association as they had been in the Baptist churches of Stokes County and in other parts of North Carolina. For three years their leaders seemingly aroused to increased activity by the realization that missions, Sunday schools and Bible societies were fostered by the recently formed Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, had been visiting the churches in Davidson County and Stokes County and the counties to the east—Rockingham, Caswell, Person and Granville—vigorously prosecuting a campaign to win to their views churches, and through the churches the associations. In 1832 they formed the Fisher's

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<sup>17</sup> *History of the Liberty Baptist Association*, p. 3 f. In this volume is found the most detailed and accurate account of the anti-missionary movement in the western half of the State. In it, also, are reprints of other documents dealing with the rise of the anti-missionary movement, and in particular, Rev. Mark Bennett's *Review of the History of the Kehukee Baptist Association*, a contemporary account of the rise of the anti-missionary movement in the Kehukee Association, which preceded by six or seven years its development in Davidson and Stokes counties. Sheets, however, has no account of the anti-missionary movement west of the Yadkin.



River Association of churches hostile to the State Convention and all that it stood for. It captured the Country Line Association which up to this time had been a truly missionary body. In the same year through sharp practices they organized the meeting of Abbott's Creek Association at Tabor Meeting House, Randolph County, refused seats to any and all who favored missions and other benevolences fostered by the Baptist State Convention, and "rejected the messengers of correspondence" from Sandy Creek Association because it was missionary.

We have seen that in 1838 the Mountain Association after a bitter struggle declared itself, by a majority vote, an anti-missionary body and hostile to "the institutions of the day," fostered by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and took its place as the first Primitive Baptist association west of the Yadkin, but that even with the threat of non-fellowship it was not able to win any corresponding association to its views. In its territory the Three Forks Association was established about 1840, the Roaring River Association in 1847. However, the action of the Association in 1838, designed to commit the entire body, its churches and their members and ministers to the acceptance and propagation of Primitive Baptist principles, was not completely successful. There remained among them many individual Baptists, some churches and some Baptist ministers, who never recognized the right of any association or any other body to place restrictions on their exercise of such Christian duties as giving the gospel to the unsaved in any part of the world, providing for the instruction of their children in religious truth, whether in Sunday schools or other places, and giving of their means for the publication of the Bible, and the establishment of educational institutions in which young men who believed they were called of God to preach the gospel might better equip themselves for their ministry. In this day it is hard

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to realize that such monstrous restrictions on Christian activities were made by a Baptist body, even a Primitive Baptist association. But it was precisely by the imposition of such restrictions that not only the Mountain Association, but all other Primitive Baptist associations in early years, and in particular those in North Carolina, thought to interfere with the activities of all who did not share their views. These views are perhaps best given in a statement from a Primitive Baptist publication, *Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association From Its Organization in 1832 to 1904*, by Jesse A. Ashburn. Mr. Ashburn was and is a trusted and highly respected Primitive Baptist minister, and his account is as authentic as he could make it.<sup>18</sup>

While it is not our purpose to enter into a detailed account of the division among the Baptists in 1830-1835, yet we would say, there was much opposition in this section to the system of Home and Foreign Missions, which was being practiced in Yadkin and the adjoining associations, to which the term "Missionary System" is applied. The churches were so much opposed to the "*new system*" that they refused, not only to send contributions for Missionary purposes, but also refused to sit in conference with, or to fellowship those who did.

The casual observer might infer from this that they were opposed to the spread of the gospel. This, however, is not true: for they favored the spread of the gospel as much—if personal sacrifices on the part of the ministry is any evidence—as any people on earth. But their objection was that, if a compensation in dollars and cents is offered, and he who goes is sure of such compensation, there is not only danger, but *great* danger of men, who are not only not called of God to preach, but designing men who know nothing of the grace of God, going out under the title of Missionaries, and preaching such doctrine as would not only dishonor God, but would burden the people. The system of High Schools and Colleges for the preparation of young men for the ministry was also objected to strongly, on the ground that many might take advantage of such opportunities, not for the truth's sake, but to benefit themselves.

Sunday schools as nurseries for the church were also vigorously opposed. In opposing these "*new institutions*," as they styled them,

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<sup>18</sup> Ashburn, *Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association From Its Organization in 1832 to 1904*, pp. 18 ff.

the ministry of this body, or association of believers rather went to such extremities that the churches almost entirely left off helping their own pastors, and some of their members came to the belief that it was wrong to give to a preacher who was worth more than the giver, no matter what his sacrifices might be. Thus the ministers, few in number and all poor men, had a hard struggle to serve their churches, obeying their heavenly calling to preach the word, and support their families, remembering the Scripture that says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."—i Tim. 5:8. Yet in their hearts and minds, they, if their words and works did not lie, felt that their greatest duty was to honor the cause of the Master who had called and sent them forth. The greatest theme of their preaching was the power of God in the salvation of sinners. They claimed that God was not dependent on any conditions, circumstances, or environments for the preaching of the word; that if his work demanded an educated man he would call one, as he did Saul (Paul) of Tarsus; or if it demanded ignorant and unlearned men he could call them, as in the case of Peter and John; that he was not dependent on Schools of learning to tame the hearts of men and women, but that he writes his laws in the hearts of men of his own will and pleasure.

On October 21, 1853, the Senter Association was formed from four churches of the Three Forks Association and five of the Mountain Associations. The following account of it is that of Fletcher, somewhat abridged.<sup>19</sup>

The Senter Baptist Association was formed from the Mountain and Three Forks associations at a convention held at Senter Church on October 21, 1853. I think it would not be amiss here to pause a moment to pay tribute to two great preachers whose names stand out in the Baptist history of this section like two mountain peaks. . . . Drury Senter and Nathaniel Senter, father and son. For many years Elder Drury Senter served as moderator of the Mountain Association and his gifted son, Nathaniel M. Senter, succeeded his father. Senter Church, at which the convention was held, was named for them and the new association formed there bore their name.

Elder Solomon Stamper preached the introductory sermon for the convention and Elder Nathaniel Senter was made moderator. John Reeves, for many years clerk of the Mountain Association,

<sup>19</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 27f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

was made clerk. There participated . . . Bear Creek, Beaver Creek, North Fork and Horse Creek churches, from the Three Forks Association, and Big Helton, Silas Creek, South Fork, Senter and Cranberry churches from the Mountain Association. . . . The Rules of Decorum and Articles of Faith were copied from the Mountain Association and adopted in toto by the convention. . . . These nine churches had 617 members. . . .

The session of 1858, the fifth year of the Senter Association, was held with Bear Creek Church in Ashe County. . . . The association at this time had thirteen churches and all of them were represented.

At this session Grassy Creek Church sent up a letter asking for advice as to the way to deal with members who were making and selling liquor, "spoiling the youths of our country and bringing disgrace on the cause of religion." To this the association made answer as follows:

"We, as an advisory council, advise our churches that if any member or members of our churches use too much ardent spirits, after the first admonition, should be expelled without sending for them. Also, if any member should make or buy spirits and allow a drunken crowd at their house, or still house, so as to constitute a disorderly house, we advise our churches to exclude them."

. . . From the minutes of this session it appears that at the session of 1857 there had been a committee named to "devise a plan or platform for the establishment of a school in Ashe County." The committee reported favorably on the project. . . . The years that followed were years of tumult, the Civil War beginning within four years, and if they had started it would have been impossible to have made any progress. . . .

(In 1859, in answer) to a query from Beaver Creek Church, as follows:

"How shall we receive a member who belongs to the Jefferson Association?"

The answer was:

"We advise our churches to receive all that went off from them by acknowledgment. Those that have joined the Jefferson Association and have been baptized by those we believe to be in this order, must come in by experience and baptism."

In 1852 the Mountain Association had given a similar query the rather evasive and indeterminate answer: "We say, as an advisory council, that we hold missionary baptism



## DIVISIONS

valid except there be a defect in the administrator, subject or mode." Seven years later, the unbrotherly spirit manifested by the Mountain Association in 1838 had got in its perfect work, and the Senter Association refused to accept, as valid, baptism by such great Baptist ministers as Elder Richard Jacks and Stephen Ross.



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## XVI

### JEFFERSON

When the Mountain Association so ruthlessly and arbitrarily read out of their fellowship all Baptist individuals and churches and ministers of the gospel who did not share their hostility to missions, they doubtless found the result surprising. Their action quickened many of the members of their own churches to a sense of the danger, and missionary influence was found strong in some of the churches that in 1841 formed the Three Forks Association, so strong that in the statistical table of the Baptist State Convention that association was classed as missionary from the beginning. The Catawba River, the neighboring association on the south, not only rejected the terms of correspondence set by the Mountain Association in 1838, but in a few years was supporting an associational missionary, and its members were reading in circular letters that it was the duty of the churches to provide for the spread of the gospel "until his way is known upon the earth, and his saving health among all nations," and reading also that "The spirit of Christ, and Christianity, is a missionary spirit."

We have already seen how, in 1838, the Brier Creek Association was one of the associations to which the Mountain Association made its anti-missionary propositions. As early as 1831, however, after hearing Elder Samuel Wait, the agent of the Baptist State Convention, it, the Brier Creek Association, had adopted a resolution:

*Resolved*, that this Association feel friendly disposed towards the efforts making by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina for the more general spread of the gospel and the improvement of the ministry.

In 1838 it remained true to its former tradition by unanimously rejecting the proposed correspondence with the Mountain Association.

From this time the Brier Creek Association maintained a co-operative attitude towards the Baptist State Convention, as did the Yadkin Association. In his report Wait said: "Brier Creek and the Yadkin Associations have since our last meeting taken the most friendly notice of the Convention and resolved to give us aid." The same friendliness was manifested by the Lewis Fork, organized in 1835-1836. Accordingly, when the Mountain Association declared its hostility to the Convention in 1838, no association east of the Blue Ridge followed its lead, though as it appears some churches in that region were led astray. In 1839 two unnamed churches from the Brier Creek Association were admitted without letters to the Mountain Association, and, as we have seen, in 1847, seven or eight churches, nearly all east of the Blue Ridge, formed the Roaring River Association, "an offspring of the Mountain Association."

On the other hand, those friendly to missions—individuals and churches and associations—had not been idle. In the Mountain Association the hostility to missions was not pleasing to all the churches. "In 1839 there were three requests from the churches presented to the association requesting that the resolutions should be rescinded and that the correspondence with the sister associations should be regained."<sup>1</sup> In the ten years after 1838, the records of the Baptist State Convention indicate that there was increasing interest in missions in the churches of the Yadkin and Brier Creek

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<sup>1</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 44.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

associations. The Agent of the Convention was visiting them and securing from individuals and churches small but respectable contributions for Convention objects. Both associations sent contributions for Home and Foreign Missions to the Convention that met at Rockford, on the Yadkin, in 1848, and people of all faiths shared in raising funds for the support of the new Rockford Academy. The churches of the Brier Creek Association undeterred and perhaps stimulated by the activity of the Primitive Baptists that resulted in the establishment of the Primitive Roaring River Association, had become aggressive, pressing westward the line of their churches and crossing the Blue Ridge into what was regarded as the territory of the Mountain Association. Already in 1848 Elder Richard Jacks and Stephen Ross, both ardent friends of missions and powerful preachers, had been laboring in Ashe County, making and baptizing converts and gathering them into churches. With reference to the early work of these two great missionary preachers in this section, Fletcher says:<sup>2</sup>

It will be noted that Richard Jacks took part in organizing four of the eight churches (of the Jefferson Association) and was probably concerned with the formation of another. Almost equally active in organizing work was Stephen Ross. It was to the ministry of these two great servants of God that the Mountain and Senter Baptist Associations objected so strenuously that they refused to accept candidates for church membership who had been baptized by either Jacks or Ross.

In 1848 the Brier Creek Association had nineteen churches, six of them west of the Blue Ridge, and at its meeting at Lewis' Meeting House in Wilkes County on September 4, 1848, with Elder Richard Jacks as moderator, took up the request of the six churches to the west of the Ridge to be organized into a new association. These churches were: Baptist Chapel, Baptist Union, Liberty

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<sup>2</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 54.



Chapel, Sugar Grove Chapel, White Top, Young's Chapel. Delegates from these churches, among them several afterwards prominent in Baptist work, met at Liberty Chapel, near Ashe Court House, and under the guidance of a committee from the Brier Creek Association, on October 30, 1848, organized the Jefferson Baptist Association. At its organization the body had three ordained preachers, five "exhorters," and 313 members.<sup>3</sup> The true missionary character of the Jefferson Association is indicated by the fact that at its organizational meeting it voted to "co-operate with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Brier Creek Association in supporting Rev. S. P. Smith to travel and preach in bounds of the Brier Creek and Jefferson Associations at \$25.00 per month."

It did not share the doctrines and practices of the Primitive Baptists. In 1849 it was already in correspondence with the Yadkin, Liberty and Brier Creek associations in North Carolina and Lebanon in Virginia. In 1854 the churches reported twenty baptisms, and had increased to 391 in the number of members, and the meeting of the Association was followed by a revival which resulted in many conversions and the addition of twenty-five members to Mount Pleasant Church. From the first also the Jefferson Association took measures for the improvement of the ministry, advising churches to recommend for ordination only men of recognized ability and "apt to teach." The Association also advised that churches provide for the payment of their ministers with funds subscribed and paid by the members. In the same year the Association considered favorably a resolution to establish an academy, as Baptist associations in other sections were doing.

Although doubtless the Association continued its annual

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<sup>3</sup> A detailed account of this first North Carolina association beyond the Blue Ridge is found in Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, Chapter III.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

meetings more or less regularly, the historian, Fletcher, found no minutes for any year after 1854 until 1868. These were troublous years for the Jefferson Association. The turmoil and disturbances that resulted in the Civil War had already begun in the mountain section, and were bringing divisions even in Baptist churches and their regrouping into new associations, of which account will be taken below. The Virginia churches of the Jefferson Association withdrew one by one. In his report of the session of 1868 Fletcher says:

Letters were handed in from five churches: Baptist Chapel, Apple Grove, Landmark, Mount Pleasant, White Top.

It appears that in twenty years the Jefferson Association had lost three churches, one-half of its number, and had remaining only 214 members out of an original membership of 313. It must be remembered that the period through which the Association had passed was one of turmoil and trouble. The Civil War dragged its bloody and soul-trying way to a close in 1865 and in its wake came hatred and jealousies that were still flaming in our mountain country for a generation after the war.

I do not have the minutes of the Jefferson Association of 1869, but I know that it met at Apple Grove Church and I have it on the highest authority that the brethren were so discouraged that they talked seriously of giving up the struggle and dissolving. They lacked preachers and were short on hope and zeal. . . .

Yet the historian, Fletcher, would not have us suppose that the condition, though somewhat discouraging, was altogether hopeless. There were indications that in the few churches there were courageous hearts, able and faithful workers, active and ready to carry forward the work. James Eller, clerk of the 1868 session of the Association, makes several statements in the published minutes which indicate clearly that the churches were rallying anew to work with thoughts not of failure but of progress. The few ministers were forthrightly serving the several churches; two churches that had been at variance had adjusted their differences and were in harmony; Elders Jackson Blevins, Levi Barker, J. Green, T. M. Duncan, and Aaron Johnston, were minis-

tering to the churches; Baptist Chapel had a "flourishing Sabbath school"; Mount Pleasant was reported as having a fine Sabbath school and regular preaching by its pastor; White Top Church carried on a "flourishing Sunday school," and had been doing much good. "On the Sabbath, the closing day of the session, there began a revival that lasted several days and resulted in many conversions and additions to the church."

Obviously, these churches and their ministers were not of the Primitive Baptist type; they were alive, and had in them the spirit of progress. The method of the churches of this region in carrying out their great purpose was to form new associations and new associational connections as often as made advisable by changes of many kinds that affected churches as all else in this region in the half century following the Civil War. Below is given a brief account of the several associations in which the missionary Baptist churches in the counties of Ashe and Alleghany have had membership.

The first of these associations to be taken account of here is the New River, Virginia, Baptist Association, which is a different association from another New River Baptist Association, which had been in existence since 1813 or earlier, and which before 1835 had become a Primitive Baptist body and was in correspondence with the Fisher's River Association.<sup>4</sup> After a preliminary meeting in June 1870, the missionary New River Association was organized on Friday before the fourth Sunday in October, 1870, at Mount Pleasant Church in Ashe County.<sup>5</sup> On its organization nearly all the constituent churches were from the Jefferson Association in North Carolina, and the Lebanon

<sup>4</sup> Ashburn, *Fisher's River Primitive Baptist Association From Its Organization in 1832 to 1904*, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> A somewhat detailed history of the Association, 1870-1926, is that of Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, Chapter VII, pp. 56-101.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Association in Grayson County, Virginia. In 1872 they numbered thirteen, and had 611 members. All the Ashe County missionary Baptist churches, except two or three, were in the new association; the Jefferson Association was discontinued but the Lebanon Association was left with a considerable number of churches and continued to exist. The historian, Fletcher, also indicates that some churches from the United Baptist and Mountain Union associations, of which more will be said below, became members of the New River Association.

It seems that in all these associations, church members had been arguing with church members, churches with churches, with much fierceness and obstinacy, "wounding the feelings of some members of said churches," and it was hoped that such troubles might be got rid of and harmony restored by organizing a new association on more liberal and more fraternal principles. Accordingly, a preliminary resolution was: "That we hereby ignore whatever occurred in the past and declare our willingness to, and do hereby, retract whatever has heretofore been done in any of the churches contrary to the spirit of the gospel and regular Baptist usage." It would seem that the troubles arose from the efforts of some in the churches to make it obligatory on their members to contribute to the support of missions and other denominational undertakings. Such seems to be the inference of the following: "It was decided to refer the matter to the churches and a statement of considerable length was prepared, in which it was set out that they were missionary Baptists, believing in missions, but not in favor of taxing their members for the support of missionaries, or coercing them into giving."

Having declared its disapproval of collection of money for missions by contributions made by church members under pressure, the New River Association did not delay in manifesting its interest in missions. At its session of 1871,



the first after its organization, it appointed Elder J. J. L. Sherwood associational missionary, and after hearing his report the next year and his great sermon with the Great Commission as his text, continued him as associational missionary, pledging \$156.65 for his support. Thereafter, the Association regularly kept an associational missionary in the field; the missionary interest was not confined to the home field. At the session of 1874, "following the report on missions by A. S. Murray, the Association pledged \$100 to state missions and \$34 to foreign missions." <sup>6</sup> From the

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\* Inspirational is the account of the work of the associational missionaries, who labored in this field, in later years as many as two a year, until well after the North Carolina churches were dismissed in 1886. Among them were several men of exceptional ability. Of Rev. J. J. L. Sherwood, Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 68, says: "At this point (1882) Elder Sherwood, who had served the cause faithfully and effectively as associational missionary and pastor of various churches and who for nearly ten years had served as moderator of the association, passes out of our history. He moved to Watauga County, North Carolina, where he soon took equally high rank among the Baptists of that county and for many years was one of the leading pastors of the Three Forks Association. He had much to do with the making of this great association, which deserves a history of its own, and I hope some day it will be written. When it is written much space will be devoted to this good man."

The following tells of another good minister of Jesus Christ (p. 64): "This session (that of 1875) is notable for the fact that it brought into Ashe County and Grayson County a very capable preacher and faithful servant of God, Elder I. W. Thomas, a native of Alexander County. Acting favorably upon the recommendation of James Eller, of the executive committee, the association voted to employ Elder Thomas as associational missionary and individual pledges were taken for his support amounting to \$130.00. He had only recently come to Ashe County and had married Miss Julia Garvey. He did splendid work in the association. He later moved to Caldwell County and died there a few years ago after having served his day and generation well and faithfully to a ripe old age. He was an outspoken friend of missions and every good cause."

Fletcher (p. 62) tells of another, J. B. Jones, who faithfully used his moderate abilities of mind and body: "I did not have the pleasure of meeting J. B. Jones but I heard much about him. He was the pastor of the church at Independence, Va., which was later moved out of town to a site two miles south of town on Brush Creek and renamed Brush Creek Church. Whence he came and whither he went I have never known. He was a small man physically, not tall enough to stand behind the old-fashioned pulpits of his day and see his congregations over them. He was a great Sunday school worker and organizer. He organized a Sunday school at Old Beaver Creek Church, in Ashe County, an anti-missionary church, in 1871 or 1872. Afterwards I attended this Sunday school, walking about two miles in order to do so. I was just a boy of 11 or 12 years, but that Sunday school

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very first session the Association took an advanced stand on missions, education and Sunday schools. In 1872 the Association pledged \$475.00 for Bristol Female College, since succeeded by Intermont. There was no school for men in the region, but at this time their interest in such a school was aroused by the following statement in the report on education by Elder J. J. L. Sherwood: "We must have educated men for all of the relations of life, regardless of vocation. To these ends we would most earnestly recommend the establishment of good academic schools of high grade within the bounds of the association." Before another year the first steps had been taken towards the establishment of Oak Hill Academy, "the first Baptist school in the mountains of northwestern North Carolina and this part of southwest Virginia." The story of the heroic efforts of these mountain Baptists to establish and maintain this school from the beginning until 1926 has been told in detail by Fletcher. Until near the close of this period Oak Hill Academy in its section, and other denominational schools in their sections, alone provided for the education of young people. The Baptists led all other denominations in providing them, since in their associations they could secure the co-operation of interested men and women.

The North Carolina churches remained in co-operation with the Virginia churches in the New River Association only a few years. Politically and governmentally the people of North Carolina on both sides of the Blue Ridge were citizens of only one state. They had a common interest with all the other citizens of the State in the public institutions, educational, benevolent and others, and this common interest inevitably brought them into association and communication with one another. It was only logical then

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made an indelible impression on my mind and shaped my destiny. I thank God for J. B. Jones and the little old-fashioned Sunday school that he established."

that the religious denominations organize their work in conventions and associations along state lines. At the time of the organization of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in 1830, there were several associations with churches partly in North Carolina and partly in other states; the disadvantages of such division of the churches soon became apparent and adjustments began and continued until only a few associations report a church in another state.

#### THE ASHE AND ALLEGHANY ASSOCIATION

It was in 1886 that the withdrawal of the North Carolina churches from the New River Association began. "The statistical tables for this year," says Fletcher, p. 72, "show that there had been a total of seventy-nine baptisms and that the churches had 1,112 members. Twelve churches reported Sunday schools with 724 members. . . . The association had increased its gifts to missions and other causes."

Fletcher's account of the organization of the Ashe and Alleghany Association (p. 102) is as follows:

As has been related, the Baptist churches of Ashe County, with the exception of Buffalo, Bethel and Mt. Pleasant, went into the organization of the New River Association in 1870, thus allying themselves with the Baptists of Virginia. This union continued until 1886 and while fine progress had been made along many lines, the arrangement had not been altogether satisfactory. The Baptist leaders of North Carolina felt that the Baptists of Ashe should be allied with their own state organization. The same feeling had been growing among the Baptists of Ashe and Alleghany counties and when the late John E. Ray, Secretary of the Baptist State Mission Board of Raleigh, N. C., made a journey up into Ashe and Alleghany, he found that his Baptist brethren of these two mountain counties were anxious to form connection with the Baptist work in their own State. His conferences with the Baptist leaders in this territory resulted in the calling of a convention to consider the formation of the Ashe and Alleghany Association and

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

this convention was held at Buffalo Church in Ashe County, September 24 and 25, 1886.

The convention was opened with a sermon by Elder G. W. Greene, and prayer by Elder I. W. Thomas. Elder T. M. Honeycutt was elected president and H. A. Eller secretary.

The constitution adopted was in the usual form, except the last clause of the 12th article, which reads:

“This association will not receive nor retain in its permanent fellowship any church that retains in its fellowship any member who is corrupt in doctrine or practice, or who makes, sells, or deals in ardent spirits as a beverage.” . . .

At this time there were only 478 Baptists in the whole field, and only four ordained ministers, these being T. M. Honeycutt, T. M. Duncan, J. F. Fletcher, and William Hall. Honeycutt was a missionary at Sparta. He came to this territory from Mars Hill, N. C., as a representative of the Western Baptist Convention. Hall came from Virginia and only lived a short time after this. Duncan was a native of Ashe.<sup>7</sup>

From the beginning the new association had a development of which it might truly be said that it was the Lord's doing and it was wonderful in our eyes. It had in some measure been prepared for by the missionaries of the Western North Carolina Baptist Convention, who for some years had labored most acceptably there. On its organization the new association, true to the training they had received in this way, and expressing their gratitude for it, declared that they would co-operate with the Baptist State Conven-

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<sup>7</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 103f. “I think I should set down here a few things about the men who took part in this epochal convention, for I knew them all intimately and well and loved them all.

“Elder G. W. Greene was at that time principal of Moravian Falls Academy, a splendid school in Wilkes County. Later he was a missionary in China. C. J. Woodson was a wise Baptist leader, a brother-in-law of Governor T. J. Jarvis. I think he is still living in Shelby, N. C. W. M. Hall was a good man, conscientious, devoted to the cause, and always ready to serve wherever there was need. T. M. Duncan was a man beloved of the people, faithful always in the discharge of his duties. He was a successful pastor and evangelist. H. A. Eller was not a preacher but from his youth was a devoted Christian. He was a son of James Eller and I can say nothing better of him than that he was worthy of his father. James Eller, who had figured largely in the history of the Baptists of Ashe County, came to Ashe from Wilkes County in 1865.”



tion, and went about their work with much zeal, and the prayer for their new organization: "May God grant that it may bring to the Baptist denomination of this country a brighter day. May it bring salvation to the many souls and glory and honor to His name." At the first meeting they made large plans for the work, and arranged for the support of two associational missionaries: D. W. Thomason to be stationed at Jefferson and T. M. Honeycutt at Sparta. Almost every year after the reports showed increases in number of churches and members and of ordained ministers. In 1888 four or five new churches were added, making the total number fourteen, served by seven ordained ministers.<sup>8</sup>

In 1890 four new churches were added, bringing the total to 18. In that year the Executive Committee reported:

In Alleghany County, Elder D. J. Harris is preaching at three points and is doing good work. In Ashe County, of Elder D. W. Thomason the same may be said. The house at Healing Springs has been completed and there are good Sunday schools at Jefferson and at the Springs.

Elder W. W. White is on the North River mission and has operated in new and unoccupied territory. He has torn down the strongholds of intemperance and established a church thereupon. He has organized three churches, one at Long Branch with twelve members, one at Roundabout (Baptist Home) with twenty members, and one at Brushy Fork with twenty members. Elder J. F. Fletcher has organized one church.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The ministers were T. M. Honeycutt, T. M. Duncan, D. W. Thomason, J. F. Fletcher, S. Blackburn, Elihu Tucker, B. C. Swift, Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup> Fletcher, *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 106. Fletcher goes on to say Elder White reported that in one community "he could find no place to preach except in a whiskey warehouse. Within the sight of this warehouse there could be seen the smoke from three blockade distilleries. He began his meetings here in an atmosphere of alcohol, surrounded by friends of the liquor business, some of whom were following it legitimately under government license and others blockading it. Before the meeting was over the distillers were converted and the liquor business had been killed in this community. One man, who had attended the meeting and had not professed conversion, returned to his still house two miles away. While here, whether awake or

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

From the beginning the Association was active in the various work usually done by progressive Baptists. In a few years well-attended Sunday schools were found in nearly all the churches. Returned missionaries and agents of educational institutions were heard in the churches and in the meetings of the Association.

In 1897 the number of the churches was 33. Of these all but three were represented at the meeting, and they heard this report of the work of Elder T. M. Duncan, associational missionary: "Elder Duncan has traveled 1,500 miles, preached 190 sermons, and witnessed eighty conversions. He has made 105 religious visits, organized ten Sunday schools, and preached at six regular appointments every month. Two new church buildings have been completed and two others are in course of construction. He has visited all of the churches in the association but three and has received from the field for his support \$53.32." There had been eighty baptisms during the year and the membership of the churches was 1,412.

At this meeting, that of 1897, it was agreed that the area of the Ashe and Alleghany Association was too large for the proper handling of it, and after full discussion it was voted to divide it into two associations, the Ashe, and the Alleghany, separated by the dividing line of the two counties.

The churches that went into the Alleghany Association were New Hope, Sparta, Chestnut Grove, Liberty and

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asleep, he heard Elder White praying for him, and he immediately quit the business. A church was built near the place. I have preached in the church and I have seen the whiskey warehouse where the meeting was held.

"The community not only went dry but it remained dry. I was told that sometime after this reversal of form a liquor manufacturer from another part of the county, hearing that there was a great shortage of ardent spirits in that community, loaded up several barrels and drove into the community. He was met by a good woman who informed him that if he unloaded any part of it there, the heads of the barrels would be smashed in. She advised him to depart and he departed."

Calloway's Chapel, a church in Grayson County, Virginia. Soon three other Grayson County churches withdrew from the New River Association and joining with the Alleghany County churches formed an association with the name of the Alleghany and Grayson Association. In a few years, however, the Virginia churches went back to the New River Association, and beginning with 1909, the Association has had the name Alleghany Association, and its churches in Alleghany County. In 1951, this association reported 12 churches, with 839 members, and 694 in its Sunday schools.

Since the division, the Ashe Association has consisted of Baptist churches in Ashe County. At first these were twenty-eight in number. Of these, twenty-six were represented at the first session of the Association at Friendship Church on September 27, 1898. Fletcher's account is as follows.<sup>10</sup>

There was a great deal of interest in this session in associational missions and all of the pastors and other ordained ministers present agreed to give not less than ten per cent during the coming year to missionary effort. . . . Two missionaries had been employed in the association during the year, T. M. Duncan and E. Blevin. They had preached 283 sermons, had organized two churches, completed two houses of worship and started four others, witnessed fifty-two conversions baptized eleven and organized eleven Sunday schools. For this service the two of them were paid \$72.61. The report to this session of the association shows increases (of contributions) to most of the objects of the Baptist State Convention, but in the matter of pay for preachers there was no increase. The highest salary paid by any church was \$28.00 and the lowest sixty-five cents.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> *History of Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 111.

<sup>11</sup> Fletcher says further: "I mention the matter of pay so that the present generation may realize something of the privations that these early-day preachers experienced and the hardships that were theirs. We are immensely proud of the great Baptist structure that exists in this territory today, but it was built upon the hard struggles, the self-sacrifice and the unselfish devotion of such men as T. M. Duncan, E. Blevins, T. M. Honeycutt, Elihu Tucker, Franklin Barker and others."

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

As told by Fletcher, Chapter IX, since its organization the Ashe Association has been zealous, active and progressive, ministers and lay members alike. It has kept its missionaries in the field, who have made and baptized converts and gathered them into churches, which have been added to the association year by year. Houses of worship have been built as needed. The churches have shown a readiness to co-operate with their Baptist brethren in their organized work in missions, education and orphanages, in the societies of women and young people. Throughout the years the older ministers have welcomed the able and enterprising co-operation of their younger members.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> On considerations of space some other aspects of the work in the Ashe Association are given here.

1. The Association sought to guard its churches from error in morals and in doctrine. As early as 1904 preachers of sanctification had appeared in many sections of North Carolina, and were gaining followers in the churches especially of Baptists and Methodists, both of which denominations regarded the new doctrine as "rank heresy" and in some instances resorted to heroic measures to check it. In the Baptist associations, any church that tolerated the preachers of sanctification was dealt with, considerably but firmly, and if any church persisted in such disorder it was excluded. Seldom if ever did a church exclude a member who had become "sanctified" so long as he did not seek to propagate his belief at the meetings in the churches; such persons, however, were free to argue for their belief and often did both to individuals and any group such as gather in the smaller towns of the State on Saturday afternoons for trade, sometimes fiercely and angrily, and sometimes ready to engage in fisti-cuffs in support of their doctrine. The Ashe Association found it necessary to deal with two of its churches on this account. One of these was the Clifton Church, which was brought to account in 1902, and proved amenable. The other was the Brushy Fork Church. In 1904, the Association, learning that this church had as its minister one of the "sanctified," addressed it in these words: "The Ashe Association humbly prays and exhorts the Brushy Fork Church to put from among them that heresy that can only blight their hopes of future prosperity and remain in fellowship and communion with their brethren who feel that they need their help in prosecuting the great work which God has called his people to do." However, though the Association sent a strong committee to the church with this resolution, it was not until 1907 that the Brushy Fork Church was restored.

In 1900 the Mission Home Church sent up a query which indicated that some of the preachers in the Association may have been preaching dangerous doctrines, disturbing the good brethren of this church. The query was: "What should be done with Baptist ministers who preach, practice in any way apostate, alien immersion, open communion or any part of these doctrines?" The following answer was given: "We, your committee, admonish that such brethren (if any in this association) that they should refrain



## JEFFERSON

In 1951 the Association had 56 churches, with 5,986 members, 4,030 in Sunday schools, and the baptisms numbered 294. The total contributions amounted to \$44,259.

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from such preaching or practice, as we believe that such is not authorized by the Word of God."

2. The Association (in 1901) passed a resolution thanking Miss Fannie E. S. Heck, President of the Woman's Central Committee of the Baptist State Convention, for sending to Ashe County eight well-trained, cultured young women for two months of teaching. These young women were placed at strategic points in the Association by the executive and had done fine work. The Sunday schools had felt their influence particularly and they had given impetus to the organized missionary work among women. The writer was well acquainted with several of these "cultured young women." Their work was in the remote coves of the mountains, and for them was almost the beginning of lives of fruitful Christian service. Some of them organized schools, and served them as superintendents; they organized woman's societies also. They were greatly loved by the children and their mothers who wondered that they could remain unmarried. In fact, not all of them did. One of them whom Miss Heck sent into Ashe County was Miss Ivey Mitchell of Bertie County. She became the wife of Mr. John Wycliffe Garvey of the Beaver Creek community and in 1901 organized in the Beaver Creek Church the first Woman's Missionary Union Society in Ashe County.

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## XVII

### OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

Intemperance in the use of intoxicating liquors has been the concern of Baptist associations and the Baptist State Convention from the beginning. One of the first acts of the Broad River Association was to provide that its moderator should write the first circular letter on Intemperance, which was the subject on numerous occasions in later years, both in the Broad River and other associations in all parts of North Carolina. As early as 1833, at the meeting of the Baptist State Convention at Dockery's Meeting House in Richmond County, a committee on Temperance Societies, consisting of David S. Williams, of Sampson, Alfred Dockery of Richmond, and Stephen Pleasants of Caswell, reported: <sup>1</sup>

Your Committee recommend the following remarks on the important subject of Temperance:—They deem this Society to be worthy of the patronage of all religious and philanthropic individuals, especially when they consider the happy effects of it in reclaiming many of our fellow men from the destroying monster, Intemperance; and restoring them to the bosom of their families, and to the respectability of society: whilst others, regardless of admonition and the force of example, have plunged into the vortex of destruction. They could present many cases within their knowledge, to prove this important truth, and the great bearing that example has on the community. They therefore would recommend to our brethren, and all the friends of humanity, that immediate efforts be made to form Societies in all our churches and neighbor-

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<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Third Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina*, p. 17.

## OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

hoods, and by example and every lawful means, to put a stop to the destructive practice of intemperance; and to be careful to avoid all arguments that will prejudice the minds of those that are taken captive by this snare of the devil.

In later years reports on this subject were made frequently. The agents of the Convention who, in these early years, canvassed all sections of the state and reported matters of religious concern to the Convention, often reported on it. In the year 1835, James Thomas, Agent, with special reference to the western part of the state, said: <sup>2</sup>

. . . The Temperance reform is evidently on the decline, and the use of strong drink is taking deep root, more or less in all this fruitful country. I have seen not less than 17 distilleries in operation this fall in my field of labour; and woful to tell, many professors of religion, who say they desire the prosperity of Zion, to do good, eschew evil, and abhor drunkenness in all its forms, make, sell, use, give, and send abroad this awful evil, and they often quote the Scriptures to justify their course. It is not the common class of men only that use and spread this poison abroad; but the official members of christian communities, and candidates for public office lend their aid, and are often assisted on in their path of honor by and through the magic influence of this monster of misery. There are some neighborhoods and individual exceptions; yes, there are some excellent ones scattered in all this region, who mourn over the ravages of this fiend of darkness; and will not cease to pray and strive against the winds and waves of opposition till help be given from on high.

We now turn to consider a development due to a secret organization, the Sons of Temperance, which began operations in western North Carolina about the middle of the nineteenth century.

Until about the year 1850 the only serious division of the Baptists as individuals, churches and associations was that into one group who co-operated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in support of missions, educational institutions, Bible societies and the promotion of

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<sup>2</sup> *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina*, p. 15.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Sunday schools, and into another group who did not so co-operate. But about the middle of the century differences of other kinds began to manifest themselves among the Baptists of northwestern North Carolina, which resulted in much bitterness in some of the churches and sometimes their disruption, and led to the organization of new associations.

The first difference to arise concerned temperance, not temperance itself, but the method of promoting it. This question was to cause much greater disturbance among the Missionary Baptists, but it first arose in the Mountain Association, a Primitive Baptist body. The following is based on Fletcher's account of it.<sup>3</sup>

In 1851 the Mountain Association was asked to answer a query: "Is it right to hold in fellowship a member of the church who belongs to any Division or Order of the Sons of Temperance?" The Sons of Temperance was a secret organization whose members on joining took a solemn oath not to use alcoholic liquors as a beverage. The answer, prepared by an able committee was as follows:

Whereas, we believe that the Scripture, or Word of God, is the pillar or ground work of truth, and we believe that the great Head of the Church, in the Divine Code that he has given to the churches to be governed by, has made temperance obligatory upon us; and we feel as an Association to recommend it in the strictest sense, and do recommend it to all men and especially the followers of Christ; and we as an advisory council recommend to the churches to exclude to their membership any member or members who join any Division or Order of the Sons of Temperance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Fletcher, *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 24 f.

<sup>4</sup> Fletcher's comment, *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 25, is as follows: "It will be seen that those early Baptists were not enemies of temperance, but its faithful proponents and their opposition to orders like the Sons of Temperance was based on the firm belief that it was the peculiar task of the church to deal with problems of this kind and that the formation of other agencies to do the work of the church would tend to weaken the church and draw the people away from it. In this day of super-organization, where everybody belongs to societies for the prevention of this and the



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The action, in 1851, of the Mountain Association, advising the dismissal from membership of all who became members of the Sons of Temperance, Masons, and other secret orders, met the approval of some churches, not only in the Mountain Association but in other associations also, both Primitive and non-Primitive. In the same year, two Ashe County churches, Beaver Creek and Old Fields, both then members of the Three Forks Association in correspondence with the Mountain Association, began to apply to their own members the action advised; the Beaver Creek Church turned out of its membership Elder Aaron Johnston, and the Old Fields Church turned out Elder Richard Gentry and his son, Capt. W. H. Gentry, all three for having joined the Sons of Temperance.

Probably contemporary with the action of these Ashe County churches, and not earlier as Dr. G. W. Greene suggests,<sup>5</sup> was the beginning of the same trouble in the Lewis Fork Association, a missionary body. Dr. Greene's account is given here:

Another temporary division was caused by a difference of sentiment concerning temperance and Temperance Societies. The trouble first arose among the churches of the Lewis Fork Association. This body was organized in 1835. At first there were only eight churches, but the number soon grew to twenty-four. These churches are mainly in Alexander and the upper end of Wilkes. In 1851 two members of Little River Church in Alexander joined the Sons of Temperance. For this they were arraigned before the church. Of the members present seventy voted to withdraw fellowship, while twenty-nine voted in the negative. Thereupon the majority voted to withdraw fellowship from the twenty-nine also. At the next session of the Association a query was sent up asking: "Is it a sufficient ground for exclusion in a Baptist church for a member to

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propagation of that, there has come to pass in many parts of our country the very situation that these sturdy forebears of ours feared and tried to guard against—the church has delegated to these outside societies, clubs and agencies, so many of the natural and original functions of the church, that the church is no longer the dynamic force for good that it once was."

<sup>5</sup> "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 77.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

join the Sons of Temperance?" This query the Association answered in the affirmative. Elders Richard Gentry, W. C. Church, Smith Ferguson, S. P. Smith, and others had sought to induce the Association not to give this answer, but the efforts were all of no avail. On Monday after the Association the thirty-one excluded members, with others, fifty-four in all, met in the town of Taylorsville and organized the Taylorsville church.<sup>6</sup> Five ministers assisted in the organization. The next year (1852), several other churches joined with the Taylorsville Church, in organizing the Taylorsville Association. About the same time the Lower Creek Association was organized, composed chiefly of churches which were unwilling to take sides in the pending controversy.

Let it not be supposed that this action on the part of the majority was prompted solely by opposition to the cause of temperance. This doubtless had its influence in the minds of many. The Temperance Reformation was still comparatively a new movement in many parts of the country. Many of these brethren had been accustomed to make whiskey and brandy whenever it was convenient, and to use these drinks as often as they wished, even as their fathers had done before them. So every advocate of the new movement seemed to be seeking to curtail their personal liberty. But besides this, many were violently opposed to all secret societies of whatever name, and the Sons of Temperance was a secret society. To this day the Reformed Presbyterians do not allow their members to join any secret society.

The first association that was formed as a consequence of the disputes about temperance and the Sons of Temperance was the Taylorsville Association. It was organized at a meeting at the Taylorsville Baptist Church, which had been constituted on October 6, 1851, of members excluded

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<sup>6</sup> From sketch of Taylorsville Church, by W. S. McLeod, Historian, in *Minutes of the Alexander County Baptist Association*, October, 1913:

"Taylorsville Church was organized on the 6th day of October, 1851, by a presbytery consisting of R. Gentry and R. L. Steele, with the following members who had been excommunicated from other churches because of their advocacy of the cause of Missions and Temperance. (The names of the fifty-four members are given.) . . . Six were Ministers, to wit: Smith Ferguson, John W. Jones, J. J. Watts, Isaac Oxford, R. L. Steele, Isaac R. Sherrill. The first pastor was Elder Smith Ferguson; the first clerk Larkin H. Jones. The moving spirit in the formation of this church seems to have been Rev. John W. Jones, who died Nov. 12, 1853. For seven years the church belonged to the Taylorsville Association, then to the United Baptist Association. . . . The churches in Alexander County belonging to the Brushy Mountain and the Brier Creek Association united and formed (in 1887) the Alexander Association.

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from their churches because they differed from the majority on the subject of temperance and temperance societies. The constituent churches of the new association, as shown in the minutes, were two in Alexander County—Taylorsville and Mt. Gilead; four in Wilkes County—Antioch, Brier Creek, Fishing Creek, and Pleasant Grove; one in Ashe County—Jefferson; one in Iredell County—Taylor Spring; one in Caldwell County—Union. In 1853 there were added three other churches—Concord and Liberty Grove in Alexander County and Mt. Airy in Surry, and before 1859 Center in Alexander County, Bethel and Trinity in Ashe County, and Temperance Hill in Caldwell County, which was a weak church which in 1858 was reported dissolved.

On the organization of the Association, Elder S. P. Smith<sup>7</sup> was made moderator, but in 1853 he was succeeded by Elder Smith Ferguson, who continued as such during the remain-

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<sup>7</sup> This statement is based on Major J. H. Foote's statement in his *History of the Brier Creek Association*, p. 208 ff., which reads:

"Rev. S. P. Smith was for a long time a leading light in this body. His preaching was attended with power and hundreds were converted under his ministry. He left the Association during the excitement upon the mission and temperance question and formed the Taylorsville Association and became its moderator. The Taylorsville at a later period became the Brushy Mountain, and Brother Smith's church was attached to the Elkin. He was the first missionary officially appointed to ride and preach in the Brier Creek Association, aided by the Baptist State Convention, and was the agent for several years of the Western Convention, and was the first Baptist minister to preach in the old town of Morganton. He was a zealous advocate of education, missions and temperance, and when opposed, his convictions of right rendered him more bold and fearless. Like some of our other ministers he was at a later period of his life drawn into politics. In 1861, he was elected with Dr. James Calloway, a member of the State convention in opposition to Secession. In 1863 his friends ran his name for Congress, but he would not enter the campaign. At the close of the year in 1865, he was chosen a member of the State convention to restore the State to the Union. He was elected to the Senate in 1868, and served with many other ministers who took part in that body. This closed his political aspirations. He had many ups and downs both in religious and political life, but remained firm and immovable in his convictions and in the evening of his career his star set in calmness and repose. We have heard this man preach some of the most soul-stirring sermons to which we have ever listened. Though of limited education his learning and bearing in the pulpit were attractive and commanding. He was annually elected pastor of the old Fishing Creek Church for 48 years and served til his death."



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ing years of the Association's existence. In 1859, upon the formation of the United Baptist Association, Ferguson was made moderator of that organization.<sup>8</sup> During all the years of the continuance of the Taylorsville Association, and perhaps longer, Elder Ferguson served as pastor of the Taylorsville Church, and also as pastor of one or more other churches. Other prominent pastors who during the years of the Association had charge in various years of its churches were: R. L. Steele, who was the clerk of the Association in all its years, S. P. Smith, Z. B. Adams, J. W. Jones, Richard Gentry, J. J. Watts, William Church, Richard Jacks, James Reed, P. Grimes, I. Oxford, J. H. West, J. Crouch, E. Martin, and J. B. Green.

It is evident that the Taylorsville Association was not a territorial grouping. Its churches were widely scattered through five counties in which there were already active Baptist missionary associations, the Brier Creek, the Lewis Fork, the Jefferson, and the Catawba River. The Taylorsville was designed to be composed only of those churches that permitted their members to belong to the secret organization known as the Sons of Temperance, as is made plain in Articles 12 and 13 of the constitution, which read:

Art. 12. This Association agrees to use her utmost influence to promote the cause of Missions and Temperance. Also declares itself

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<sup>8</sup> Of Elder Smith Ferguson, Greene, "The Baptist of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 81f., says: "Of the ministers of this period, one name is preeminent. Others were popular, influential, and useful in a narrower circle; but Smith Ferguson's popularity, influence and usefulness extended over all these counties and Associations. Born in the later years of the last century, he was old enough to be a soldier in the War of 1812. Soon afterwards he entered the ministry and continued in active labors for more than half a century. Crowds waited on his ministry, churches were anxious to secure his services as pastor or as adviser in cases of difficulty. Associations were glad to receive him as correspondent and counsellor. Sound in faith and prudent in counsel, an advocate of missions and temperance, he exerted a mighty influence for good in all this mountain country. As a preacher he was tender, pathetic, persuasive, and hundreds were glad to count him as their father in the gospel. He lingered into the last quarter of the century, and departed with the reverence of all who knew him."



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a Missionary and Temperance body, but does not claim the power to compel any of the churches to engage in them against their will, but does enjoin submission; and any church who is found unfellowshipping any member on account of his Mission or Temperance principles alone, shall be read out of the fellowship of this body as a disturber of the peace of the brethren.

Art. 13. Any church shall be received into this body who shall adopt the Constitution of the Churches already composing this body, by sending up letters and delegates.

However, the organization of the Taylorsville Association is significant because it was a manifestation of interest in more than one cause. At this time there was an awakening to the need of general religious progress among the Baptist churches of this section, including those of the Taylorsville Association. In his *History of the Brier Creek Association*, Major J. H. Foote gives the following account of it:<sup>9</sup>

While steadfastly holding on to the ancient landmarks, and the cardinal principles of the New Testament, not till the year A. D., 1850, did the (Brier Creek) Association go into active work respecting the object of contention among other Associations and some of her own members. It was during this year that that noble Christian man, Rev. J. J. James, visited the body in the interests of general education and Missions. He was heartily received by the Association and preached with great ability. We find by reference to the minutes of that year, that Elder S. P. Smith and James Parks were appointed a committee to write a short report on Home Missions, and Elders Z. B. Adams and J. B. Green to write on Foreign Missions, and Elder W. F. Adams and Brother David Edwards to write a report on the propriety of Sabbath Schools. Elder James got in a resolution "to establish a Female Academy." Thus the work of education and missions began, and the next year (1851) we find admirable resolutions on Missions and Sabbath Schools. Thus after a period of thirty years from the organization of the Association, the objects which have called forth so much spirited and useful discussion appear for the first time in the records.

From its organization the Taylorsville Association was active and progressive, particularly in missions and education.

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<sup>9</sup> P. 201 f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

In accord with its missionary profession, the Taylorsville Association in 1853 "elected Elder J. J. Watts our missionary to travel and preach six months in the bounds of the Taylorsville Association, allowing him \$25 per month for the time he labors, the delegates agreeing to exert themselves to raise the funds amongst the churches." During the meeting Watts preached a missionary sermon, at the close of which a collection was taken amounting to \$21.60 for missionary purposes. These measures were continued in latter meetings of the Association, and reports on both Home (associational) and Foreign Missions were regularly brought before the Association for discussion, and the pastors of the churches, usually in succession, supplied the destitute sections with missionaries throughout the year. In 1856 the Association adopted the following resolution:

Whereas we believe it to be the duty as well as the privilege of all Christians to contribute to the cause of Missions, 1st. Resolved, therefore, that we recommend that each church give 10 cents per member for Home Missions, and 5 cents per member for Foreign Missions, to be raised by equality of ability and send up the same to the next Association by their delegates.

Just what amount was secured in this way is not evident from the minutes, but not enough to pay Elder Z. B. Adams, who reported that he had travelled 96 days and was due \$80 for his work, and had collected nothing.<sup>10</sup> Afterward, the Association began to co-operate with the Western Baptist Convention in the support of Elder Isaac Oxford as a missionary in the section. In point of fact, however, the pastors of the churches of the Association were ready, when called upon, to do missionary work. In 1856, while Adams was the head missionary, Elders R. Gentry, Wm. Martin, Isaac

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<sup>10</sup> At this time Elder Z. B. Adams moved to Missouri. The Association resolved, "That we deplore the loss of so bright and shining a light in this time of our great need, when there is so much need of Missionary and Temperance preaching in our Young Association." His father, Elder Jesse Adams, was moderator of the Brier Creek Association for thirteen years, 1836-1849, when he died.

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Oxford, and P. Grimes, made extensive tours, preaching and in some instances establishing Sunday schools. Missionary also was the practice of the Association of arranging for protracted meetings, sometimes with churches of the Association, and sometimes in other places, and appointing several able preachers for each of them. In 1857, appointments were made for five such meetings. One of these was for the Taylorsville Church, for which Elders Richard Gentry and Richard Jacks were asked to assist the pastor, Elder Smith Ferguson; another was in the town of Wilkesboro, which Elders Smith Ferguson and Richard Gentry were asked to attend; still another was with Pleasant Grove Church in Wilkes County, in which the pastor, Elder Wm. Church, was to have the assistance of Elders J. H. West of Caldwell County, and Aaron Johnston of Ashe County; and another was at the recently established church of Bethel in Ashe County, where Elders J. B. Green and J. H. West were asked to assist Elder Richard Green, the pastor. The minutes for the next year show that Pleasant Grove received 15 by baptism, Taylorsville 14.

Almost contemporaneous with organization of the Association was the movement which resulted in the establishment of a high school in the town of Taylorsville. At the session of 1853, the Association voted strong approval of the project. This was the beginning of the United Baptist Institute, which proved to be one of the most successful of the academies established by the Baptists. In 1856 \$190 was subscribed for its support. In 1857 it was reported in a highly flourishing condition, and it was recommended that steps be taken to enlarge its accommodations, and that the churches raise fifty cents per member for its support.

In 1857 the Association voted to co-operate with sister associations in establishing a "Baptist Female College in the bounds of the Western Convention" and appointed a committee for the purpose. It was with this Convention that the

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Association was affiliated. It regularly sent delegates to its meetings and advised its churches that each of them send at least one delegate to the annual meetings, providing for their expenses. In August, 1858, the Western Convention met at Taylorsville.

Having declared in its constitution that it would use its utmost influence to promote the cause of missions and that of temperance, the Taylorsville Association seems to have had the ready co-operation of the churches without further exhortations in the cause of temperance. Only in 1853 is there reference to it in the minutes. Elders R. Gentry and Aaron Johnston, both of whom had been turned out of Ashe County churches for joining the Sons of Temperance, were appointed "to write a short report on Temperance." Whether they wrote it does not appear from the minutes in hand. However, there are indications that the Association did a very great work in gaining favor for Temperance throughout the entire region. Its ministers—Smith Ferguson, S. P. Smith, Richard Jacks, Aaron Johnston, Richard Gentry, Z. B. Adams, Isaac Oxford, R. L. Steele and others—were able and well beloved, and exercised a powerful influence. Under their leadership the Association sought to establish friendly relations with other associations. In 1852 the Taylorsville Association came into correspondence with the Beulah Association, and in the next year with the Catawba River and probably the Holston. In 1857 it passed a resolution declaring that it was "desirous of effecting a union and communion with all our sister Associations as soon as all embarrassing difficulties can be removed." These difficulties varied; probably the Brier Creek Association deferred coming into correspondence because it resented the fact that the Brier Creek Church and probably others of its churches had joined the new body. The Catawba River was very cordial, although one of its churches, Union in Caldwell County, in 1853 transferred its membership to



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the Taylorsville body. In 1854, seemingly due to sympathy with the Taylorsville Association, the Catawba River dropped correspondence with the Lewis Fork "on account of her anti-temperance principles." In 1857 the Association was officially informed by Elders James McNeal and Wm. Pool that the Lewis Fork Association at its last session had rescinded the act of 1851, making the joining of the Sons of Temperance a bar to fellowship, and expressed their high appreciation of their "noble and active Christian spirit," and appointed three of their ablest and most influential members—Elder Smith Ferguson and brethren J. H. Foote and A. H. Martin—messengers to attend the next session of the Lewis Fork, and propose a correspondence with her. The next year Elders Smith Ferguson, James Reed and Isaac Oxford were sent on a like mission to the Lower Creek Association. In 1858, likewise, the Association passed a resolution advising the churches of the Association "to use all necessary means" to adjust any difficulties that had hitherto existed between them and the churches of the Lewis Fork, Lower Creek, Brier Creek and Three Forks associations, "and becomes as one body." From the above it is clear that already at this time Elder Smith Ferguson and other leaders of the Taylorsville Association were planning the organization of the United Baptist Association, which in 1859 was formed of three of the associations just named—the Taylorsville, the Lower Creek and the Lewis Fork. The Brier Creek and the Three Forks continued their separate existence. An account of the United Baptist Association follows.

The preamble and articles 2 and 11 of the constitution of the United Baptist Association read:

Whereas, the Lewis Fork, Lower Creek and Taylorsville Associations, being met in convention by delegates from the different associations at Zion Hill for the purpose of uniting in one association, in order to be enabled to carry out the gospel principles of missions

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and temperance, having united as a Missionary and Temperance body, we adopt the following constitution:

Art. 2: In the selection of delegates the churches shall pay strict regard to the moral and intellectual qualifications of the ones appointed.

Art. 11: This Association shall withdraw her fellowship from any church in her confederacy which holds members in fellowship who distil, vend or use spirituous liquors as a beverage.

At its first session the Association adopted a resolution favoring Sunday schools and asked that the churches report on them at the meetings. From the first the Association was contributing to missions, home and foreign, and to education.

At the meeting, October 16, 1862, at King's Creek Church in Caldwell County, signs of trouble appeared: "Thirteen churches were under investigation for violating Article 11 of the constitution, and fellowship was withdrawn from three. The association continued to ring true on missions, education and temperance."

It was at this session that some or all the churches of the United Baptist Association became dissatisfied and re-organized the Lewis Fork Association which operated separately for nine years. By this time, says Greene, "It was discovered that the two bodies had substantially the same principles and purposes and occupied the same territory; so the United Baptists and the Lewis Fork Associations were united to form the Brushy Mountain Association."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Fletcher, *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 34, ff., gives a more detailed account of the beginning of the United Baptist Association. Following his account of the expulsion of Elders Johnston and Gentry and the son of the latter from the Ashe County churches, he continues: "The ousting of of men of this type from Baptist churches was not confined to Ashe County. Over in Alexander County, North Carolina, Elder Robert Steele was expelled from the church (of Little River) for the same reason. Soon thereafter, he and three other preachers from Alexander and Wilkes counties journeyed over into Ashe County and joined forces with Elders Johnston and Gentry in rounding up progressive, forward-looking Baptists and getting them together in church organizations. These men organized the famous old Bethel Baptist Church. The preachers who came to Ashe County with Elder Steele were Elder J. J. Watts, J. H. Watts and Z. B. Adams. A little later, Elders Johnston and Gentry went over into Alexander

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At the time of its organization in 1872, the Brushy Mountain Association was more extensive territorially than at present with some of its churches in the counties of Ashe, Alexander and Caldwell, but for many years now its churches have been only in Wilkes County, which it shares with several other associations. In 1885, it dismissed Piney Grove, Lower Creek, Sardis, Lovelady and Union, all of which joined in the formation of the Caldwell Association. The next year Dudley Shoals was dismissed to join the new association, and in 1887, King's Creek. In 1886, three Ashe County churches were dismissed, and in 1887 all Alexander County churches withdrew to form the Alexander Association. The Brushy Mountain Association was thus reduced territorially to Wilkes County, and was somewhat weakened. Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the Association in 1890 attempted to interest the churches of the Elkin, Primitive and Brier Creek associations in the formation of a Wilkes County association, but did not succeed. Since that time, there has been a gradual increase in the number of

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County and helped Elder Robert Steele and his associates form one or more churches of the same character, these finally forming the Taylorsville Baptist Association.

"The heaven spread. Within a very few years there were many churches like Bethel Church and on November 11, 1859, we find them meeting in a convention at Zion Hill Church in Wilkes County for the purpose of forming a new association to be known as the United Baptist Association—the first association in our mountain country to come out boldly for missions, Sunday-schools and temperance. It required courage of an unusually high degree to do the things that this association did, and much of our Baptist achievement, of which we are so proud today, would not have been possible if these splendid men had not lived and wrought so wonderfully.

"It is recorded that the convention opened with a sermon by Elder William Pool and that Elder S. Ferguson was elected moderator and P. Eller clerk. Entering into the organization of the United Association were three associations, viz.: Lewis Fork with eleven churches; Lower Creek with four churches, and Taylorsville with eleven churches, a total of twenty-six. These churches reported twenty-six ordained preachers."

Fletcher continues his account and gives a list of these preachers and the licentiates of the churches and their delegates. The preachers were: Richard Gentry, Aaron Johnston, T. Reed, R. L. Steele, J. G. Bryan, William Pool, J. Crouch, P. Tritt, G. Swaim, H. Holtslaw, S. P. Smith, William Church, S. Ferguson, P. Grimes, L. Pipes, H. M. Stokes, J. H. Brown, L. Land, J. McNeill, A. W. Vannoy, J. B. Green, E. Tilley, J. H. West, D. Austin, M. Austin, I. Oxford.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

churches belonging to the Brushy Mountain Association. In 1951 it reported thirty-five churches, 250 baptisms, 7,255 members, 5,581 in Sunday schools, and total contributions of \$231,603.

Another division of the Baptists in this section has proved more serious and longer continued than that told of above, and perhaps is unique in Baptist history in that it was caused by differences on political issues, the issues being those which caused the War of the Secession and which continued to be discussed with much conviction and bitterness in the years that followed that war. The situation among those who lived along the Blue Ridge is described by Fletcher:<sup>12</sup>

It has been a source of surmise and conjecture to many people that there were so many Union sympathizers in the mountains of Western North Carolina, but to me there is nothing strange about it. Our mountain people were not slave-owners. Most of them were barely one generation removed from the hardships of pioneer days and had not accumulated wealth enough to own slaves. In addition to that, the mountaineer wherever you find him, is a lover of freedom himself, and is always the last man to deny freedom to others. There was no liking for the institution of slavery in the mountains.

Accordingly these mountaineers opposed secession. During the war, however, this section furnished its full quotas of Confederate soldiers, though there was evidence of disaffection in some neighborhoods. It was after the war had ended that the troubles that caused the division among the Baptist churches of this region began. The Union sympathizers, as they were called, were now free to manifest their principles, and many of them, including members of Baptist churches, joined the Union League, a secret political organization. Since it was secret, membership in it was in violation of the declared and generally accepted rule of the Mountain and other Primitive Baptist associations. But

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<sup>12</sup> *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 30 f.



## OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

soon there were Union League members in many of the churches, both Primitive and missionary, who declared themselves to be such by wearing a red string, the badge of the order. It was only natural that the presence of these "Red Strings" in their churches should have been regarded as a challenge to the other members to rid their churches of them and the bitterest of strifes resulted. Fletcher<sup>13</sup> thus describes the situation:

The dominant party used the edict of the Mountain Association against the Union League men, and where they could muster enough votes, they ousted the Union Leaguers from their churches. If the Union League members and sympathizers could poll the most votes, the other faction was kicked out, and so it went. There was hatred and bitterness and bloodshed. When I was a child I remember neighbor shooting down neighbor because of differences of opinion on political matters, such as the slavery question.

One prominent Baptist minister, with a record of usefulness behind him and who served faithfully and effectively in the years that followed, was so much stirred up over the slavery question and the troubles that followed in the wake of the war, that he was heard to exclaim in meeting at Silas Creek Church:

"The time has come when the two parties cannot live together in the church. I'll see every rebel hung as high as Haaman's gal-lows before I will fellowship them."

Within two years after the close of the Civil War the view that there could be no fellowship in Baptist churches with those classed as rebels by the minister whose words have just been quoted gained wide acceptance in other counties west of the Blue Ridge and in particular in Ashe and Alleghany. It doubtless interfered with the development of the work in the Jefferson Association, which lost half of its churches and soon afterward disbanded. "It must be remembered," says Fletcher,<sup>14</sup> "that the period through which the association had passed was one of tur-

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<sup>13</sup> *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 31.

<sup>14</sup> *A History of the Ashe County, North Carolina, and New River, Virginia, Baptist Associations*, p. 52.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

moil and trouble. The Civil War dragged its bloody and soul-trying way to a close in 1865 and in its wake came hatred and jealousies that were still flaming in our mountain country for a generation after the war." But it was the churches of the Primitive Baptists that were most seriously affected by this movement, and it led them to unite in the formation of new associations, more missionary than anti-missionary, in which they were lost permanently to the Primitive Baptists.

Of these new associations Dr. G. W. Greene<sup>15</sup> gives the following brief but comprehensive account:

These churches whose members sympathized with the North were organized into three Associations. Those in Caldwell, Watauga, and a few in Wilkes, formed the Stony Fork; the rest of those in Wilkes formed the Primitive; and those in Ashe and Alleghany formed the Mountain Union. This last name is significant. These brethren had formerly been connected with the old Mountain Association. Now they separated because of their sympathy with the cause of the Union. So they chose a name which would declare both these facts. They all were sometimes called Union Baptists, especially in the territory of the Mountain Union Association. After the war these Baptists were usually Republican in politics, and because of certain political societies whose badge was a red string, they were sometimes called by their detractors "Red-String Baptists." For a long time these three Associations had correspondence only with each other and had little intercourse with others.

Probably the largest and most active of all these associations was the Mountain Union. For a better understanding of this all but extinct group of Baptists, their ministers, their principles and purposes, readers are referred to Fletcher's sympathetic account in Chapter V of his history.

Writing in 1899, Dr. Greene, in the article already cited, said that the schism made by political differences was practically healed; men of different political faith were in full

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<sup>15</sup> "The Baptists of the Upper Yadkin Valley," *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, III, p. 79f.

## OTHER ASSOCIATIONS

fellowship in the churches and recognizing one another as Christian brethren. In 1879 several churches of the Primitive Baptist Association joined in the formation of the Elkin Association, a missionary body. Before 1889 the Stony Fork Association was regularly sending its delegates to the Baptist State Convention. In 1897 the Primitive Association dissolved, or rather changed its name, the churches that had remained in it forming the Stone Mountain Association, which from its organization has co-operated with the Baptist State Convention. In 1951 it reported twenty-six churches, 89 baptisms, 3,986 members, 2,773 in Sunday schools, and \$35,844 total contributions.

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## XVIII

### SOUTH AND WEST OF THE CATAWBA

In a former chapter we have seen that, owing to difficulty in purchasing land, the development, including religious development, was somewhat delayed in that portion of western North Carolina which was in the Granville Tract and co-extensive with Rowan County on its formation in 1753.<sup>1</sup> It was different in that part of Anson County which remained after Rowan was cut off. Lands could be purchased there from the early years, and there had been many settlers before 1750, when Anson was formed from Bladen. Though great numbers from Virginia and Pennsylvania were occupying the newly opened lands in Rowan, at the same time the flow of immigrants into Anson County also increased in volume. Settlers were coming from every direction; some from Pennsylvania and Virginia, but probably the greater number from the older settlements in eastern North Carolina. Sometimes these came in considerable groups, such as those which composed the emigrating Baptist churches on Deep River; others came from the adjacent sections of South Carolina, following towards their sources such streams as the Pee Dee, Lynches Creek, the Wateree

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<sup>1</sup> According to the geographical divisions of 1912, the dividing line would be along the northern boundaries of the counties of Moore, Montgomery, Stanly, Cabarrus, and Mecklenburg, and the southern boundaries of the counties of Randolph, Davidson, Rowan and Iredell, and then (no longer following county lines) passing in a direct line a few miles north of Lincoln-ton and on just to the south of Asheville to the Tennessee line. North of the dividing line was all or nearly all of the territory of the counties of Catawba, Burke, McDowell and Buncombe.



## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

(Catawba), and the Broad. According to Foote,<sup>2</sup> in the years 1750-1755 Presbyterians — Scotch-Irish — in great numbers had occupied the best lands in what is now Mecklenburg County. In 1762, only twelve years after the establishment of Anson County, the western growth of the population had become so great that a new county was called for, and to meet the demand all of Anson County west of an irregular line about fifteen miles east of the present western line of Union County was cut off to form the new county—Mecklenburg. No western boundary for it was indicated. The natural western boundary would seem to have been the Catawba River, but the home-seekers, finding the best lands to the east of that river already occupied, had even before the formation of Mecklenburg County in 1762 crossed that stream, some to the south, others to the north, and were entering lands of their choice and building their homes in the wide expanse of territory to the west and south of the Catawba River. In six years after the establishment of Mecklenburg County these had become numerous, and in 1768 a new county, named Tryon, was provided for them by cutting off from Mecklenburg the part to the west of the Catawba River from the point where it crosses the Lord Granville line southward to the South Carolina line.

No western boundary of Tryon County was named, but in 1767 Governor Tryon made a treaty with the Cherokee Indians which provided that the whites should not extend their settlements to the west of a line running from Tryon Mountain northerly a little to the west of the site of Boone and on to the Virginia line. Although this treaty was soon disregarded it doubtless checked and delayed somewhat the flow of the settlers to the section of North Carolina south of the French Broad River.

During the provincial period no other counties were

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<sup>2</sup> *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 77 ff., p. 189 f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

formed in this section, but in 1777, by act of the state legislature, Burke was erected from the Catawba River portion of Rowan County, and in 1779, by legislative act, Tryon County was abolished and its territory formed into two new counties, Lincoln County on the east and Rutherford County on the west. In 1791 Buncombe County, occupying the entire southwestern corner of North Carolina, "large enough for a small state,"<sup>3</sup> was formed from Burke and Rutherford. Until after the year 1800 the only counties west of the Catawba were Lincoln, Rutherford, Burke and Buncombe.

The general physical features of the land surface of this section of western North Carolina are well known. From the Yadkin River westward the surface is rolling, gradually rising in altitude and breaking into hills and mountains as the Blue Ridge is approached. West of the Blue Ridge the country is altogether mountainous, with mountain streams and valleys. East of the mountains the entire section is adapted to agriculture, and some of the best farming lands in the state are those in the valley of the Broad and the Catawba, which from pioneer days attracted settlers who owned their own plantations and made a living for their families by their own labor.

The river systems of western North Carolina have been connected in important ways with the development of the Baptist work. In the early days communication between church and church was much easier up and down river valleys than across divides. Perhaps this in part at least accounts for the fact that so many of our early western Baptist associations had the names of rivers. Such are the Yadkin Association, South Yadkin, Brier Creek, Three Forks, Stony Fork, French Broad, Broad River, Catawba River, Tuckasegee, South Fork, Green River, Sandy Run, and Tennessee River.

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<sup>3</sup> Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 114.

## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

Geographically the Catawba River is the northern and eastern boundary of the section of North Carolina which we are now considering. This noble stream has its headwaters in and around Old Fort in McDowell County, just to the east of the Blue Ridge. From its source it flows eastwardly in a flat arc to the north of the towns of Marion, Morganton and Hickory, and near Millerville in the southeastern corner of Alexander County, it makes a curve through Lookout Shoals and between the counties of Catawba and Iredell, and flows on south to form the dividing line between the counties of Mecklenburg on the east and Lincoln and Gaston on the west.

On the west and south the Catawba River has only one considerable tributary, the South Fork of Catawba River. This is formed a few miles south of Newton by the junction of a smaller stream and the Henry River which rises south of Morganton and flows eastward. From the junction the South Fork flows in a direction slightly to the east of south by the towns of Lincolnton, High Shoals and McAdenville to join the main Catawba near the South Carolina line. Then, with the change of name to the Wateree, the river flows on to join the Congaree below Columbia.

Next to the west from the Catawba valley are the several branches of the Broad River and their tributaries, which go to make up the great upper Broad River basin of North Carolina which on the north extends westward from the Catawba River divide in Cleveland County through the hills and elevated lands along the southern border of the counties of Burke and McDowell, and on to the eastern slopes of the Blue Ridge in Henderson County. Near the towns of Chimney Rock and Bat Cave the Main Broad River has its sources. Coming out of Henderson County a strong stream, it flows on southeastwardly near the border between Rutherford and Polk counties, near the southern end of which it is joined by Green River which comes up from the southwest,

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

having its sources along the South Carolina line near Saluda, and makes its way through the hills and mountains of Henderson and Polk counties with a great curve. Lower down, near the town of Cliffside, the Main Broad receives the waters of another fine stream, the Second Broad River, which coming from its sources in McDowell County enters Rutherford County west of Thermal City and flows irregularly south through almost the entire length of the county. Further east, a few miles south of Boiling Springs in Cleveland County, the Main Broad makes a junction with its sister stream, the First Broad River, which, rising in the hills on the borders of Burke and eastern Rutherford, in its course cuts off the northeastern corner of Rutherford County, and entering Cleveland passes southward near Fallston and a few miles west of Shelby to its junction with the Main Broad a few miles south of Boiling Springs. From this point the Broad River, carrying the waters of the great valley above, enters South Carolina and, receiving many tributaries from the east and the west, joins the Saluda just south of Columbia to form the Congaree, which below on the western border of Sumter County joins the Wateree to form the Santee, which great stream carries to the sea the rainfall of all the territory of North Carolina between the western divide of the Yadkin River and the Blue Ridge, and much of that of South Carolina.

To the west of the Broad River Basin is that of the French Broad. This stream has its sources in the western slopes of the Blue Ridge, in the counties of Transylvania and Henderson, and makes its way northward, flowing five miles west of Hendersonville, and past Asheville and Marshall, and on into the state of Tennessee, and joins the Holston to the east of Knoxville to form the main Tennessee River.

Further west and south still is the Tuckaseigee River, which has its sources in Transylvania and southern Jack-



## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

son, and flowing northward past Sylva, forms the dividing line between the counties of Jackson and Swain. Further west are the Upper Little Tennessee, the Nantahala, which joins the Tennessee below, and the Hiawassee.

Governor Tryon's treaty with the Indians in 1769 did not cause a cessation of trouble with them in Tryon County, in particular in that part of it near the mountains. It was not until 1776, when the Cherokees had been severely defeated in an expedition led by that great Indian fighter, General Griffith Rutherford, that the settlers in Tryon County had any sense of security. Of the troublous state of this section during these years, some account is given in the statement by the historian Griffin:<sup>4</sup>

The county (Tryon) covered a large territory, the major portion of it uninhabited by the white man, and claimed by the Cherokee Indians. From its natural location its frontiers were continually exposed to the ravages of the Cherokees. The county militia was perhaps more highly organized, considering the county's large extent of territory, than any other county in the state. The frequent Indian disturbances and the constant menace from the tomahawks kept the inhabitants of this sparsely settled region alert to their danger. During this (the provincial) period there were erected at several points in the present Rutherford County forts or stockades, for protection against the Red Men. Fort McGaughey stood near the present Britain Presbyterian Church, and its foundations were visible until a few years ago. Fort McFadden was located on Mountain Creek, near Rutherfordton. A number of early homes were so constructed as to be used as a stockade. Another stockade stood somewhere in the Montford Cove community. About the same time another stockade was erected in the present town of Old Fort.

A brief account is here given of the early settlements in the region to the west and south of the Catawba River. In the northern part of this section, that included in the present counties of Catawba, Lincoln and Burke, the first settlers did not come until about 1750, and then were few,

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<sup>4</sup> Clarence W. Griffin, *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 7 f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

mostly hunters and trappers and traders. The first land grants were in 1749. We have seen that when Spangenburg had crossed the Catawba at Lambert's in October 1752 he did not see a white man, but the woods were full of Indians, who resented the intrusion of white men on their hunting grounds. For the white men had already been there with their surveyors and laid out the best lands for plantations. It was only after the breaking out of the French and Indian wars about 1754 that immigrants from the provinces to the north began to come in great numbers, "multitudes of new people." Of these some were English-speaking, who settled in the eastern portion; others were Germans, whose settlements were in the central and westward portion toward Morganton. "So that by 1775," says Sherrill,<sup>5</sup> "there was a considerable population west of the Catawba."<sup>6</sup>

Brittain (Westminster) until 1802 the only Presbyterian church in the original Tryon County, was in that portion of it which in 1779 became Rutherford County, and writing only of Lincoln County Sherrill takes no ac-

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<sup>5</sup> William Sherrill, *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, p. 8 f.

<sup>6</sup> Sherrill, *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, p. 7f, gives several interesting facts about the history of this section. "It is not known for certain who were the first settlers west of the Catawba. . . . The late Alfred Nixon . . . stated that 'the first pale face to set foot on Lincoln soil was John Beatty' who crossed the Catawba in 1749 at the ford which bears his name and settled near the present Unity Presbyterian Church." When he made this statement Nixon had in mind the Lincoln County of today, not the original larger county. "John Beatty's land grant bears date July, 1749." The first Sherrill grant is dated April 5, 1749, while the Weidner grant was issued in 1750. "It matters little who came first. The records do not determine the fact, but the Beattys, the Sherrills and the Weidners were certainly among the first to settle west of the Catawba River. . . . They (the Weidners) were certainly the first Dutch settlers in the larger county of Lincoln." "He (Judge M. L. McCorkle) stated that Weidner came about 1745 and that he started west from Adam Sherrill's at Sherrill's Ford, without pilot or companion, to explore an unknown land inhabited by wild beasts and hostile savages. Going west from Sherrill's Ford he discovered the South Fork at the point where the smaller streams come together. He was armed with a gun, the barrel about six feet long, while a tomahawk and long knife were in the scabbard."

Sherrill gives a long list of the names of the English settlers and another list of the names of the German—all names of families now numerous in Catawba, Lincoln, and Burke counties.

## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

count of it, but says of Lincoln County that there were many Presbyterian families among the early settlers but that it was not until about the year 1796 that they organized their first church. This was the Unity Presbyterian Church in the Beattie's Ford community. Sherrill makes this statement in regard to it:<sup>7</sup>

Unity Presbyterian Church was the pioneer religious organization in the Beatties Ford community. It was established about 1796 or earlier. John Beatty was one of the charter members and Rev. Humphrey Hunter, the pastor from 1796 to 1803, was the first Presbyterian preacher to serve a church west of the Catawba River, and he laid the foundation at Unity and Goshen upon which the Presbyterian Church has been built in Lincoln and Gaston Counties.

Mr. Sherrill also tells of the beginning and early development of the work of other religious groups in this section.<sup>8</sup> With reference to Lutheran and German Reformed, he says:

Among the earlier settlers were the Pennsylvania Dutch, who were Lutheran and German Reformed in faith. They had much in common, were the same stock and spoke the German language. They established a church in several communities where they settled, for the use of both denominations. The first of these union churches, commonly known as the old White Church in Lincolnton, was built about 1788.

Mr. Sherrill mentions only one other church established and used by these two German groups,<sup>9</sup> saying "Daniels Church was organized about 1786, though the old records date back to 1809." Like nearly all the churches built by the Germans in this section of North Carolina, these were owned, or at least used, in common by the German Reformed and the Lutherans. It seems that these were the only two German churches organized before the year 1800 in old Lincoln County. Doubtless the German congrega-

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<sup>7</sup> *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, p. 481.

<sup>8</sup> *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, Chapter XXVI.

<sup>9</sup> *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, p. 473.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

tions were much more numerous. According to Bernheim, as quoted by Sherrill:<sup>10</sup>

They (the settlers) were generally farmers, lived in the country, ignorant of the English language, not shrewd enough for merchants, well read in the Bible and other German devotional books, lived at home and were good farmers. Their churches were therefore in the country. In the absence of pastors in the early days they had the school teacher to read prayers on Sunday and self-appointed missionaries preached now and then and administered the Sacrament, while the school teacher generally read burial service for the dead and in urgent cases baptized children. Though they had few ordained ministers, in 1785 the German population of North Carolina from Pennsylvania was over fifteen thousand.

Doubtless included in this estimate are all the German settlements in the State.

It is only a surmise that the Lutherans and German Reformed denominations had "at least twenty churches prior to 1776" (Griffin). There is no record of German settlements in the southern part of Tryon County.

Though the legislative act of 1768 providing for the erection of Tryon County named St. Thomas Parish coextensive with it, no minister was appointed for it. The first Episcopal church west of the Catawba seems to have been that at White Haven, located a mile south of Lowesville, in what is now Gaston County. It was established in 1786. There is no record of any other Episcopal church in this section until after 1800.

The first Methodist churches in the section west of the Catawba were Rehobeth, according to some<sup>11</sup> organized about 1789, Oak Grove, organized in 1792, and Hopewell, organized in 1800.

Except for the Baptists, the religious beginnings in the old Tryon County territory were those indicated above. For a better understanding of what was the religious con-

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<sup>10</sup> *Annals of Lincoln County, North Carolina*, p. 476.

<sup>11</sup> See Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 274.



## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

dition in the entire section west of the Catawba there is added here Griffin's summary<sup>12</sup> of the churches in Rutherford County in 1800:

Up to 1800 there had been a marked religious development in Rutherford County, considering its remoteness and unsettled condition. Within the present bounds of the county there were in that year, one Presbyterian church, two Baptist churches and two Methodist churches. Brittain Church, the oldest was organized in 1768. Bills Creek Baptist Church was next, being founded in 1785, followed in 1787 with the instituting of Mountain Creek Baptist Church. The Oak Grove Methodist Church was organized in 1792, and Hopewell Methodist Church in 1800. Pisgah and Wesley's Chapel Methodist Churches were organized in 1802. These seven churches might well be called the mother of their respective denominations in Rutherford County and western North Carolina, for as their usefulness increased their influence spread, sending the Gospel to the remote corners of the mountain section of western North Carolina.

We now turn to consider Baptist development in this section, all west and south of the Catawba River, beginning with that in the original Lincoln County. Below we shall see that probably as early as 1772 Long Creek Baptist Church had been established near the present town of Dallas in Gaston County and became a member of the Bethel Association at or soon after its establishment in 1789. Another Baptist church in Lincoln County was that of Hebron. The date of its establishment is not known. Of its early history we have the following account:<sup>13</sup> It was at what was once known as Abernethy's Ferry, and later Rozzell's, twelve miles west of Charlotte, at the point where "the plank road to Lincolnton crosses the river." It was on the west side of the river. "The log house in which these people worshipped first stood on the river bank, immediately at the ferry. No records of the church are known to exist earlier

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<sup>12</sup> *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 584.

<sup>13</sup> Graham, *History of the South Fork Association*, p. 12f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

than 1834, but tradition and reference in old deeds carry us back to 1792."

The further history of this church and congregation is given by Graham. Among the earliest pastors were John Ruker and Hosea Holcombe. In 1832 it moved its house of worship to a new site, one-half mile from the river; when this old building was destroyed by a weight of snow on the roof in 1852, the services were suspended until 1883, when the church was reorganized. The section in which it is located is now one of the strongest rural Baptist areas in North Carolina.

From Graham we also learn that about fourteen miles north of Dallas, and nine miles east of Lincolnton, and six miles west of Beattie's Ford on the Catawba River was the church known as Earhardts, which began its work about 1763 and until about 1830, more than half a century, was the one center of Baptist influence in all the northeastern section of Lincoln County.<sup>14</sup> The following statement is found in Graham's *History of the South Fork Association*:<sup>15</sup> "From 1772 to 1776 Patrick Moore of South Carolina

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<sup>14</sup> Graham's account, *History of the South Fork Association*, p. 16f., is as follows:

"Abram Earhardt, upon whose land the house was located, and for whom it was called, came from Pittsylvania County, Virginia. He was here as early as 1763; was an ordained minister and preached at the church and elsewhere. He owned more than a thousand acres of the best quality of land in this section, also a number of slaves, whom he desired to liberate in his will, but thought they would be worse off free in Africa than slaves in this country. He died in 1809. He built the first flouring mill in this region, also conducted a saw mill, cotton gin, tan yard, blacksmith shop and a distillery. His wife was a sister of Peter, Jacob and Abram Forney, the most influential men of that period. Some of the members of the family were members of the church. The Forneys married Abernethys related to those at Hebron.

"Preaching was continued at the church, or in the orchard at the house until the death of the widow in 1829.

"Those who could have given a history of the church have passed away, and what, no doubt, was an interesting chapter in Baptist history will never be recorded. The site is now owned by the writer (Graham). It is about one and a half miles from Kid's Chapel. A grand-niece of Mr. Earhardt and her children are members of Kid's Chapel."

<sup>15</sup> Page 40.

## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA

preached regularly in the neighborhood of Mt. Zion Church (King's Mountain Association) some twelve miles west of Lincolnton towards Shelby, and at other places in this region." Possibly, Moore's preaching here was in some way connected with that which about this time resulted in the formation of the church at Sandy Run, a few miles north, but there is no record of the establishment of any other Baptist church. Before the year 1800 there were two Baptist churches in Burke County, both of which continue to this day, and are members of the Catawba River Association. One of these is Silver Springs in the southwestern part of the county. It was admitted to the Broad River Association on its formation in 1800, and was then described as "recently formed." The other church is Smyrna, located twelve miles north of Morganton beyond the Catawba River. Already a strong church, it became a member of the Broad River Association in 1801, with Elder Ambrose Carlton as its delegate. On the formation of the Catawba River Association in 1827 Silver Creek was a constituent member, and with the exception of a few years, has continued as a member of that body. The Smyrna Church joined the Catawba Association in 1828 and continues as a member of it.

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## XIX

### SOUTH AND WEST OF THE CATAWBA—2

In the southern part of the old Tryon County section—in the present counties of Gaston, Cleveland, Rutherford, and Polk—the settlements seem to have begun somewhat earlier than in the north, and to have been extensions of the settlements further east in North Carolina and adjacent parts of South Carolina, between which and North Carolina the dividing line had not yet been officially and definitely established. Just when the first white settlers came is not indicated in any historical record, but certainly before the year 1740 they were very few, and for ten years longer only a few squatters who lived by hunting and trapping and buying and selling furs. It is well established, however, that with the opening of the French and Indian War in 1754-1755, immigrants from Virginia, Pennsylvania, and other provinces to the north came to this section as well as other sections of North Carolina in great numbers. And they continued to come; in the summer and autumn of 1765 more than a thousand wagons of immigrants bound south passed through Salisbury, and most of them, thought Governor Tryon, settled in North Carolina. Doubtless many of them found their homes in the region to the south and west of the Catawba River, which lay just ahead. As told above this section was erected into Tryon County in 1768. The next year, 1769, the sheriff reported 1,226 taxables.



Of the early religious development in this section Griffin says:<sup>1</sup>

"The first church established within the present bounds of Rutherford County—in fact, the first church west of the Catawba River—was the Brittain Presbyterian Church," in the year 1768; on its organization it had three elders and twenty members with Rev. Daniel Thatcher as its minister. The church, known today by the name Westminster, also is in that district in central northern Rutherford, known from the early days as Brittain, among whose inhabitants were several Presbyterian families from the vicinity of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. However, Griffin says that the early records of this church have been lost or destroyed and indicates that much of his information is traditional. He gives a list of the names of the families, partly, but evidently not all, Scotch-Irish, who came to this section "during the French and Indian War." This statement would fix the date of the settlement in the years 1754-1763, which is much more likely correct than Mr. Griffin's previous statement<sup>2</sup> that "the Westminster or Brittain community was settled prior to 1740." He says also that until 1802 this church, Brittain, was the only Presbyterian church in Rutherford County, which would indicate that groups of Presbyterians no longer came to Tryon County, but were content to remain east of the Catawba.

We now turn to an account of the work of the Baptists in the territory of old Tryon County.

The Baptists were only four or five years later than the Presbyterians in their work in this section. They did not, like the Presbyterians at Brittain, make settlements consist-

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<sup>1</sup> *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 584 f.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 3.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

ing chiefly of those of their own denomination, but their work west of the Catawba was in the nature of extension of new Baptist developments from the Little River in what is now Montgomery County to the headwaters of Rocky River in Mecklenburg on the east, and the Broad River development in South Carolina on the west. From the places of both these developments communication was easy with the new settlements west of the Catawba.

Our earliest accounts relate the establishment not of one Baptist church in this region, but of three, all contemporaneous and all established under the same auspices, and by Separate Baptist preachers. These three churches—all exist today—are (1) Long Creek, one mile south of the present town of Dallas in Gaston County; (2) Sandy Run, near the present town of Mooresboro, on Sandy Run Creek; and (3) Buffalo Church, which is situated on the main public road leading from Rutherfordton, North Carolina, to Yorkville, South Carolina, about four miles north of Buffalo Creek, from which stream it derives its name, and about one-half mile south of the North Carolina State line. In 1772, the now established date of its constitution, Buffalo was thought to be on the north side of the State line, and is listed as a North Carolina church by Asplund in 1790, and by Benedict<sup>3</sup> in 1813. It was not until the State line had been established by the survey ordered in 1774 that Buffalo Church was found to be in South Carolina.<sup>4</sup> Both before and after that time many of its members lived

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<sup>3</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 531.

<sup>4</sup> Griffin, *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 11: "Tradition says that several of the courts (of Tryon County) were held in the York District, S. C. At that time the North and South Carolina boundary had not been extended westward, and there were doubts as to where the line should be located. In fact South Carolina at that time laid claim to the entire territory, and the South Carolina officials protested, when Tryon County was formed, that North Carolina was creating a new county out of South Carolina territory."

in North Carolina, as did their pastor, Rev. Joseph Camp, of whom Miss Townsend<sup>5</sup> says:

Rev. Joseph Camp (Kemp) was according to tradition from Maryland; he settled in N. C. near the S. C. line in the neighborhood of Buffalo Church, which he is said to have organized; he was arrested by Cornwallis to obtain information of Morgan's movements but was released; his knowledge of medicine was of great service to his community; an honored and active member of Bethel Association from its beginning, he served as moderator in 1791, as member of various committees, and as writer of circular letters, though his education was limited; he was equally active in Broad River Association, and as supply and assistant to neighboring churches; he probably secured land in S. C. in 1799 and 1805, but emigrated to Kentucky in 1808.

Account of the organization of these three churches is given both by Logan<sup>6</sup> and Major Graham.<sup>7</sup>

Graham has special reference to Long Creek, it being a member of the South Fork Association of which he was historian. He says of it:<sup>8</sup>

This is the oldest church in the territory of the South Fork Association. The time of its organization is uncertain, some claiming 1772, others 1777. It was a member of the Bethel Association, which was formed in 1789. It is on Long Creek, Gaston, formerly Lincoln, County, and about one mile from Dallas. There are no records of its earliest history. Its church records begin with a reorganization in 1794.

His further statement is in accord with his impossible theory that the Sandy Creek Separate Baptists had no part in the beginnings of Baptist work in this section. He says:<sup>9</sup>

. . . From what evidence I can gather, it seems probable that these churches were constituted in 1772 by ministers in the Broad River

<sup>5</sup> *History of South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 139 n.

<sup>6</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Association, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 582, Buffalo; p. 589, Long Creek; p. 599, Sandy Run.

<sup>7</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 6, p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 6.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Association and that the "visitors" came in 1777, found them "inactive" and put them to work again.

And Major Graham goes on to insist:

Whoever may have constituted these churches, their development and the occupation of the contiguous territory was the work of the Broad River Association.

In making this statement Major Graham disregards the well established fact that it was the Separate Baptists from Sandy Creek, Mulkey and Marshall, who established the first Baptist churches in the Broad River section of South Carolina.

The date of the organization of the church at Sandy Run, which is connected with Buffalo and Long Creek in the tradition of the visit of the Sandy Creek missionaries, is stated by both Dr. N. B. Cobb and Dr. J. D. Hufham to be 1771.<sup>10</sup> This date is in practical agreement with that given by Elder D. Scruggs, as quoted by Logan,<sup>11</sup> which was 1772. Benedict's<sup>12</sup> date, 1788, is probably that of a reorganization; an earlier date is indicated by the fact that it was one of the first four North Carolina churches which became members of the Bethel Association seemingly from the time of its formation in 1789. Asplund, fifth edition, gives the date as 1788, probably a deduction from the fact that it became a member of the Bethel Association on its organization.

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<sup>10</sup> *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, I, p. 92, "Colonial Baptists of North Carolina," by Rev. N. B. Cobb, D.D.; *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 26, "The Baptists of North Carolina," Third paper, by Rev. J. D. Hufham, D.D.: "In like manner some sought refuge among the Separate Baptist churches in the mountains of South Carolina. Two families, Durham and Davis, went into Tryon, now Rutherford County, N. C., and toward the close of 1771 the church at Sandy Run was organized, mainly through their instrumentality. It sent out many colonies to form other churches and has had no small share in making a Baptist stronghold of Cleveland and Rutherford counties."

<sup>11</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 599.

<sup>12</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 531.



## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA—2

The third of the three churches which according to tradition were constituted in 1772 by two visiting Separate Baptist preachers from Sandy Creek Association, is Buffalo Church in York County, South Carolina. The evidence with reference to this church strongly verifies the tradition. This evidence is twofold. First is the statement of Logan:<sup>13</sup>

... We are informed by brother R. E. Porter, the acting clerk of the church, that he had it from the mouth of Dr. William Curtis, now deceased, that while engaged in his researches preparatory to the publishing of an Associational history, . . . he found an old copy of the Minutes . . . in which it was stated that Buffalo Church was first organized in 1772, while the historian Benedict gives the date of the constitution in 1777. Bro. Porter suggests that the first organization may have been defective, owing to some informality, and was probably in 1777, remedied and made more valid by a properly organized presbytery, as he is informed two traveling ministers from the Sandy Creek Association in North Carolina that year visited the section of country and organized the church in regular order, ordaining at the same time two ministers and three deacons. Elder Joseph Camp was probably one of the ministers, and William Davidson, Jacob Green and James Bridges were doubtless the deacons.

The second class of evidence with reference to the date of the establishment of Buffalo Church is documentary. Thanks to the researches of Miss Leah Townsend, it is now no longer a tradition, but well authenticated, that it was established as early as 1775, and probably earlier, was functioning as a duly organized Baptist church, with a minister of its own choosing, and was represented at a meeting of delegates to the Congaree Association in 1776 by Elder Joseph Camp. These statements indicate, as Miss Townsend says, that the congregation had been constituted a church before 1777, the date assigned by Benedict, and had entered the Congaree Association as early as 1776.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 582f.

<sup>14</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 139; p. 175. Her full statement, p. 139, is as follows: "Buffalo Church, only a half mile south

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After 1777 there is no further record of Baptist activity in this section until after the close of the Revolutionary War. In no other part of the State was the strife between Whigs and Tories more bitter. In the sanguinary battles at Ramsour's Mills in June, 1780, and at King's Mountain, in October, 1780, neighbor fought against neighbor, Americans against Americans, and doubtless not a few joined with General Morgan in his defeat of Tarleton at Cowpens in January, 1781. But even in this period of war, the case of Joseph Camp proves that some of the Baptist preachers remained at their posts. Though the disturbances doubtless brought the suspension of religious work, it did not bring it to an end.

We now consider the associational membership of the churches of this section. It is stated by Miss Townsend<sup>15</sup> that the Fairforest church, organized in 1762 in the adjacent section of South Carolina, "was a member of Sandy Creek Association and one of the constituent members of the short-lived Congaree Association in 1771 and of the Bethel Association in 1789." Miss Townsend's further statements leave no doubt that in this order—Sandy Creek, Congaree, Bethel, was the associational development in this section of South Carolina. Of the North Carolina churches in the adjacent section, except for Buffalo, mistakenly believed to be in North Carolina, there is no record of as-

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of the North Carolina line and about seven miles west of Blacksburg, S. C., was in its early years connected with the Fairforest group of churches. James Fowler, a young licentiate of Fairforest, supplied the church occasionally in 1775-1776. Rev. Joseph Camp is the only minister recorded before 1800, and as early as September, 1776, he is said to have represented Buffalo Church at a meeting of delegates held at Fairforest (Congaree Association). These statements indicate that the congregation had been constituted a church before 1777, the date usually assigned, and had entered Congaree Association. Like most of the churches of the back country, Buffalo Church disappeared from recorded history during the Revolution; it emerged in 1789 as a constituent member of Bethel Association. Rev. Joseph Camp had probably been the pastor during the whole period and continued to serve at least through 1800 and possibly several years longer."

<sup>15</sup> *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 127.

## SOUTH AND WEST OF CATAWBA—2

sociational membership until 1789; only probably until this time the North Carolina churches belonged to the Sandy Creek Association. But beginning with 1789 our information is definite. In August of that year the Bethel Association was organized at Cedar Springs Baptist Church about four miles south of the present city of Spartanburg, and in it were Baptist churches of both states. Twelve of its sixteen churches were in South Carolina; these were Buffalo, Tyger River, Reedy Fork, Buck Creek, Head of Enoree, Fairforest, Padgett's Creek, Big Creek, Genestie, Horse Creek (Fork Shoal), Cedar Springs and Upper Duncan's Creek. Possibly there were two others—Durban's Creek and Dirty Creek. Sharing in the organization were four North Carolina churches, White Oak, Bill's Creek, Sandy Run, and Mountain Creek. In addition, Long Creek, according to Major Graham,<sup>16</sup> "was a member of this Association." There were other North Carolina Baptist churches, several of which later came into the Association. Asplund, fifth edition, gives the following record of them:

| <i>Church</i>         | <i>Date</i>    | <i>Ministers &amp;<br/>Licentiates</i>      | <i>Number of Members</i> |             |             |             |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                       | <i>Cons't.</i> |   | <i>1790</i>              | <i>1791</i> | <i>1792</i> | <i>1793</i> |
| Buffalo Creek         | 1777           | Joseph Camp, William<br>Wilkey (licentiate) | 60                       | 73          | 69          | 69          |
| Bill's Creek          | 1782           | None listed                                 | 48                       | 37          | 38          | 35          |
| Green River           | 1778           | Daniel Brown, Edw.<br>Williams (licentiate) | 70                       | 80          | 92          | 88          |
| Mountain Creek        | 1789           | Perminter Morgan                            | 31                       | 60          | 106         | 114         |
| Sandy Run             | 1788           | None listed                                 | 80                       | 80          | 92          | 88          |
| French Broad<br>River | 1791           | Richard Newport                             |                          | 16          | 18          | 28          |

The first five of the churches listed were in Rutherford County, the other in Buncombe. Asplund does not list Long Creek.

In its organization and its activities for eleven years the Bethel Association was composed of churches in North

<sup>16</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 5.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Carolina as well as South Carolina. An account of it for those years has a proper place in a history of North Carolina Baptists.

A summary of its work beginning with 1789 and ending with 1805 is given by Miss Townsend.<sup>17</sup> The time of its annual meeting was in August. From the first it was aggressive and progressive. In general it was true to the faith of its Separate Baptist fathers. Though in their first year they came into communication with the Charleston Association, they did not unite with it, as the Charleston Association wished it to do. "In general it held to the Calvinistic sentiments,"<sup>18</sup> and had not adopted the Philadelphia Confession prior to 1804. In the conduct of its meetings it did not differ in any important way from other associations. It had a moderator, and a clerk, first William Lancaster, afterwards the first clerk of the Broad River Association, and then David Golightly; "James Fowler cared for the printing and distribution of the minutes from 1791 to 1800, a collection being taken for the purpose at each meeting."<sup>19</sup> Appointment of the writer of the circular letter and preacher of the introductory sermon was haphazard at first, but beginning with 1794 was regularly made at the meeting prior to that at which they were to serve. Bethel was soon in regular correspondence with associations in Virginia, Georgia, North Carolina and other states. "Nothing came of Bethel's adoption of a resolution in 1794 to address the corresponding associations on the subject of forming a general committee of associations in the Southern States similar to that in Virginia,"<sup>20</sup> seemingly because the plan received only lukewarm approval by the Charleston Association. "The appointment of supplies to vacant churches was carefully attended to from the first." "Queries from the churches

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<sup>17</sup> *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, pp. 261-269.

<sup>18</sup> *Asplund's Register*, 5th ed.

<sup>19</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 262.

<sup>20</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 263.



covered the whole field of faith and practice.”<sup>21</sup> Much was done to see that the ministers who served the churches were competent and worthy, and if any proved to be at fault in doctrine or moral conduct, they were advertized publicly at the meetings of the Association and in published minutes, and with warning to the churches not to receive and hear them. “A report of 1792 on ordination of ministers called for clearest evidences of real piety and gifts and the calling in of three, or at least two, reputable ministers to assist.”<sup>22</sup> Fairforest in 1793 asked whether rebaptism should be required of immersed pedobaptists admitted on faith. The Association referred the question to a special committee, and after long consideration finally disagreed with the report of the committee advising the churches to admit members without rebaptism.<sup>23</sup> Brush Creek Church inquired in 1795 whether it is disorderly to commune with other denominations; the answer was emphatically, “Yes.” The question in slightly different form recurred in 1797, and was put before the Association by two churches in 1802 when the intermingling of various denominations at revival meetings was causing uncertainty on the subject. The position of the Association was steadily maintained. Bethel also declared non-fellowship in 1790 with those members holding “universal salvation.”

From its beginning in 1789, the Bethel Association became “an increasing and nurturing community, beyond any of the kind in the State (of South Carolina),” said Benedict<sup>24</sup> writing about 1810. Such was the Association in the years 1789-1800 when the North Carolina churches belonged to it. In those years it made steady and substantial progress. Miss Townsend shows<sup>25</sup> that this association, organized

<sup>21</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 264.

<sup>22</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 264.

<sup>23</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 265.

<sup>24</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 157.

<sup>25</sup> *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 266.

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in 1789 with sixteen churches, in 1790 had twenty-one churches with 1,152 members, and in 1800 had fifty-two churches, with 2,805 members and 35 ministers. The baptisms were well over 100 every year, beginning with 116 in 1791, and being 207 in 1792, and 179 in 1799.<sup>26</sup>

In a few years the Bethel Association had become widely extended with churches scattered over the part of South Carolina to the northwest of Columbia and in neighboring parts of North Carolina. It was soon realized that the territory of the Association was too large for its proper functioning. According to Miss Townsend:<sup>27</sup>

Agitation for the division of the Bethel Association began in 1795, when Mountain Creek Church offered the suggestion. The committee reported adversely, but recommended the Enoree as the dividing line if the break should be made. Again in 1796 a committee reported against division. The next year a motion to divide Bethel into four associations, each sending delegates to a general committee, led to the holding of conferences, but the motion met defeat in 1798. Bethabara Church continued the agitation in 1799, and although the association again negatived division, further conferences among the churches led to action.

The action had probably been delayed because of varied local interests. It was the plan of the North Carolina churches that finally won approval of the Association. It provided that in the new association should be all the North Carolina churches, and such other churches from the adjacent parts of South Carolina as wished to join them. The wisdom of such a plan of division is evident. The Bethel could continue its expansion towards the Georgia line, and

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<sup>26</sup> During these years, the tables show that the numbers received and dismissed by letter were very great, the largest number received being 154 in 1798, the largest number dismissed being 271 in 1799, which perhaps accounts for the fact that in nearly every year there is report that a church had become extinct. These figures indicate that in these years Baptists, as well as others, were seeking new homes. Another series of figures shows that the churches retained only the fit in their membership. The least number of "excommunicated" reported was 18 in 1792; in 1793 the number was 46; in 1797, 59; in 1800, 64.

<sup>27</sup> *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 266.

the new association could occupy the vacant spaces between the Catawba and the Tennessee line. Seemingly, the North Carolina churches had another reason for favoring the division as made. From the time of its organization, no session of the Bethel Association was held with a North Carolina church, and only one minister, part of whose work was with a North Carolina church, was asked to serve it as moderator, preacher of introductory sermon, or writer of circular letter. The exception was Elder Joseph Camp, of whom some account has been given above. He was moderator in 1791, and again in 1798.<sup>28</sup> The first suggestion for a division, as told above, came from Mountain Creek, a North Carolina church with Perminter Morgan pastor, in 1795. Not succeeding with the Association as a whole this year or the next, in 1797 the North Carolina churches held meetings to create greater interest and form definite plans for a new association, in all of which they probably had the support of neighboring churches across the state line. The first meeting was with the Greens Creek, November, 1797; the second with Sandy Run Church in October, 1799; the third again at Greens Creek in January 1800. In the following August the full association at its annual meeting approved the division on the plan proposed, granted letters of dismission to the several churches for the purpose of forming the new association, to which was given the name Broad River.

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<sup>28</sup> See Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 267 f. for tables giving "full information on the conduct and relations of Bethel Association; officers and place of meeting of Bethel Association, 1789-1803."

## BROAD RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Above a brief account has been given of the Bethel Baptist Association for the period from its formation in 1789 to August 1800 when the North Carolina churches and some South Carolina churches were dismissed for the formation of a new association—the Broad River Baptist Association. The South Carolina churches were (1) Tyger River (Concord), ten miles south of Spartanburg; (2) Boiling Springs, about seven and three-quarters miles north of Spartanburg; (3) Goucher Creek (also called Goshen), eight miles southwest of Gaffney City; (4) Cedar Springs, four miles south of Spartanburg; (5) Buck Creek, eight miles easterly from Spartanburg; (6) State Line, “north-westerly of Gaffney City about six miles,”<sup>1</sup> about a quarter of a mile south of state line; (7) Buffalo, in York County, seven miles west of Blacksburg, one-half mile south of state line. It is to be observed that all or nearly all these churches were in that section which was first evangelized by Mulkey and Marshall, Separate Baptists of Sandy Creek, and were of what is known as the Fairforest group and were the oldest churches in that section. Fairforest became a mother church with many branches, among them Tyger River and Friendship, which came into the Association in 1801, both of which were organized in 1765.

<sup>1</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 574.



## BROAD RIVER

The North Carolina churches, with indication of their present location and associational connection, dismissed at the same time to join with the South Carolina churches in the new association were these: (1) Greens Creek, in the southeast section of Polk County, and member of Sandy Run Association; (2) Green River, Polk County, member of Green River Association; (3) Sandy Run, Cleveland County, member of Sandy Run Association; (4) Long Creek, in Gaston County, one mile south of Dallas, Gaston County Association; (5) Mountain Creek, Rutherford County, Green River Association; (6) French Broad, Henderson County, five miles west of Hendersonville, Carolina Association. In addition to these seven, were two other North Carolina churches newly formed, (1) Caney River, in — that portion of Buncombe County which in 1851 was cut off to form Madison County, and is now in Yancey County; and (2) Silver Creek in the southwestern corner of Burke County, which became a constituent member of the Catawba River Association at its formation in 1827, and after some errancy is today a member of that body.

It was these nine North Carolina churches which in November, 1800, at the close of the 18th century joined with the seven South Carolina churches at Sandy Run Meeting House, near Mooresboro, Cleveland County, in the formation of the Broad River Association. The church furthest east was Long Creek, near Dallas, that furthest west was Caney River in Madison (Yancey) County. Probably there were other North Carolina churches in this area which did not join in the organization. We lose sight of White Oak, one of the constituent churches of the Bethel Association in 1798; in 1801 Smyrna Church, in Burke County to the north of the Catawba River, was admitted; there were other churches of which some account was given above, Hebron and Earhardt, in which Baptist were maintaining worship late in the 18th century; but only those named

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became members of the Broad River Association in its earlier years. Our chief concern is that the records show that at the organization of the Broad River Association the North Carolina churches numbered nine, the South Carolina churches seven, of which two, Buffalo and State Line, being near the dividing line, drew their membership from both states. In these early years also the territory of the Association in North Carolina was far more extensive, extending from the Catawba River to the Tennessee line. In what follows our task will be to tell of the Baptist development in the North Carolina churches and territory, but with recognition of the fact that until 1851, the development was the result of the co-operative work of the churches of the Broad River Association in both states. In the Baptist economy nearly all the major activities of their churches are determined by the associations of which they are members, and their history is largely that of the associations. With this in mind we proceed to the story of the Broad River Association and of the other North Carolina associations that developed from it.<sup>2</sup>

By the year 1851 four groups of North Carolina churches had been dismissed by the Broad River to form new associations. First of these were all the churches in the territory west of the Blue Ridge, dismissed in 1807 to join in the formation of the French Broad Association. The next group was dismissed to form the Catawba River Association in 1827; the next was the group of churches that formed the Green River Association in 1841; the next and last group dismissed for the purpose of forming a new association were those churches which in 1851 formed the King's Mountain Association.<sup>3</sup> The result has been that

<sup>2</sup> The chief source of our information on the Broad River Association and the King's Mountain Association is *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, by Deacon John R. Logan, Shelby, N. C., 1887.

<sup>3</sup> In this period only one group of South Carolina churches was dismissed to form a new association. This was the group dismissed in 1833 to join in the formation of the Tyger River Association.

## BROAD RIVER

after some later adjustments only South Carolina churches remained in the Broad River Association, and all North Carolina churches in this region were in North Carolina associations.

As shown on the map of associations in the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* for 1952, in the former North Carolina territory of the Broad River Association there were twenty-two active Baptist associations. Following the map from east to west, and reading from north to south, we can see the location of each of these associations:

| <i>Name</i>        | <i>Organized</i> | <i>Present No.<br/>of Churches</i> | <i>Present No.<br/>of Members</i> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| South Fork         | 1880             | 58                                 | 14,842                            |
| Gaston             | 1919             | 64                                 | 24,417                            |
| South Mountain     | 1911             | 28                                 | 4,430                             |
| King's Mountain    | 1851             | 62                                 | 20,645                            |
| Catawba River      | 1827             | 44                                 | 9,747                             |
| Blue Ridge         | 1888             | 41                                 | 7,554                             |
| Green River        | 1842             | 38                                 | 8,085                             |
| Sandy Run          | 1890             | 58                                 | 17,785                            |
| Mitchell           | 1841             | 36                                 | 6,864                             |
| Yancey             | 1888             | 33                                 | 5,310                             |
| French Broad       | 1807             | 46                                 | 8,045                             |
| New Found          | 1856             | 32                                 | 4,029                             |
| Buncombe           | 1882             | 83                                 | 23,201                            |
| Carolina           | 1877             | 60                                 | 11,773                            |
| Haywood            | 1886             | 52                                 | 10,340                            |
| Transylvania       | 1882             | 30                                 | 5,103                             |
| Cherokee           | 1882             | 15                                 | 1,136                             |
| Tuckaseigee        | 1829             | 48                                 | 7,853                             |
| Tennessee River    | 1862             | 46                                 | 7,459                             |
| Macon              | 1904             | 42                                 | 7,089                             |
| Western North Car. | 1885             | 46                                 | 7,756                             |
| West Liberty       | 1850             | 29                                 | 3,266                             |
| <b>TOTALS</b>      |                  | <b>991</b>                         | <b>216,729</b>                    |

Though there is no record of the proceedings of the organization session, it is well established that the delegates of the sixteen churches mentioned above met in November 1800 at Sandy Run Baptist Church in Rutherford (now

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Cleveland) County and organized the Broad River Baptist Association.<sup>4</sup> From this time information is full and complete except for one or two years.<sup>5</sup> At the time of its formation in November 1800 the territory of the Broad River Association extended from Union County, South Carolina, to the present western limits of Buncombe and Madison counties, North Carolina. Though suffering the loss of several groups of churches in the meantime, until the formation of the King's Mountain Association in 1851 the Broad River Association was the most extensive and most important association in which North Carolina Baptists ever co-operated with those of another state.

We have seen that the movement which resulted in the formation of the Association in 1800 had arisen and been fostered chiefly among North Carolina churches. Of the ten classed by Logan<sup>6</sup> as the "most prominent ministers of that time," six either lived in North Carolina or served North Carolina churches. Those were Joseph Camp, Ambrose Carlton, Perminter Morgan, John Blackwell, Joel Blackwell and Thomas Justice. The other four—Thomas Burgess, Isaac Cantrell, David Forest, and Abram Hargness—served South Carolina churches. For Logan's estimate of these men see footnote.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 268f. Miss Townsend refers to the Church Book of the Cedar Springs Church as the source of her information.

<sup>5</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 10. "Having now a full and complete file of the minutes, we will for the benefit of the future historian, and the gratification of a large Baptist posterity, embrace the opportunity now offered us of ferreting out from old musty records now before us, some incidents connected with the early history of the churches forming the Broad River and King's Mountain Associations, which, we doubt not, will be interesting and profitable to the descendants of the pioneer fathers who guided the helm of religious affairs in the times that have passed away."

<sup>6</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 11f. "A few words



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In the first period of this association, that from its organization in 1800 to the dismissal of the churches west of the Blue Ridge to join in the formation of the French Broad Association in 1807, the Association met with North Carolina churches in six of its eight meetings—at Sandy Run (organizational meeting) in 1800, and the annual meeting of 1804; at Greens Creek in Rutherford County in 1801 and again in 1807; at New Salem, Rutherford County, in 1803; at French Broad Church, Buncombe (now Henderson) County, in 1805. In these meetings ministers with North Carolina connections had prominent parts. Joseph Camp was moderator in 1802, and by appointment wrote the circular letters in 1802 and 1804. Ambrose Carlton, pastor of Smyrna Church in Burke County, was moderator in 1805 and preached the introductory sermon in 1804, and wrote the circular letter in 1805 and again in 1807.

Perminter Morgan of the French Broad Church was also outstanding in the early years of the Broad River Association, but upon the formation of the French Broad Association was lost to the Broad River. It is convenient, however, to give here the following sketch of him by Griffin:<sup>8</sup>

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must suffice in reference to the old pioneer ministers of 1800. It does not appear from any record that we can find that any of them were distinguished for literary acquirements; they however, were men of very respectable talents, who were remarkably zealous and successful in the most noble and benevolent employment on earth: the winning of souls to Christ. It may well be said that these pioneer and uneducated ministers must be studied and their striking modes and measures of success, as among the most useful of the past; their industry and courage in the work; their disinterestedness and fidelity; their patience and perseverance; their hard lives that resulted in furnishing them with hard acquirements. How many of them could read men so as to shame and put to flight half the readers of books, when they became their opponents! How many attained a most touching pathos; an irresistible eloquence; a surprising aptitude of selecting right words, that fell like mill-stones, as some one has said, true *practical rhetoric*. How many were good expositors and sound divines!"

<sup>8</sup> *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, 1730-1930*, p. 594, footnote.

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Perminter Morgan was born in Virginia August 29, 1755, from whence he emigrated to North Carolina. He was on Deep River in Guilford County in the fall of 1773, where he signed a petition to the Colonial Council. He then removed to Rutherford County about 1775, where he married Gracie Jones. He settled within one mile of Piney Knob Baptist Church, near Union Mills. Later he moved to Sugar Hill in what is now McDowell County, where he spent the remainder of his life. He reared ten children, who with his wife, were living when he died April 28, 1824. He was a son of Stephen Morgan and a grandson of Perminter Morgan. He had a brother, James Morgan, who resided in Rutherford County. Perminter Morgan was the first pastor of Mountain Creek Church, and was also pastor at Bill's Creek, Bethel and other churches. He was a man of great piety and of unusual force as a speaker. He was a frequent messenger to the Charleston and Bethel Associations prior to 1800. He helped to organize the Broad River Baptist Association in 1800. He preached the introductory sermon in 1802 and 1806, wrote the circular letter in 1803 and 1806, and was moderator in 1803, 1804, 1806 and 1809.<sup>9</sup> He was in the French Broad Association in 1812 as pastor of Bethel Church. Gracie Jones, his wife, was born March 27, 1775 and died December 4, 1834. Both are buried at Bethel Church, in McDowell County.

In 1807, the introductory sermon was preached by Drury Dobbins who was born in York County, South Carolina, but who in 1807 was pastor of Sandy Run Church, and was to continue as such for more than forty years, until his death at the age of seventy-two, on May 19, 1847. During this time he missed only one session of the body and he rendered the Association more distinguished public service in its annual meetings than any other man, having among his other services of this kind been moderator in twenty-five or more of its annual sessions, and having refused unanimous election to the place in 1846, the last session before

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<sup>9</sup> Logan, who had access to the minutes of the Broad River Association, says that in 1809 Elder Jacob Crocker was elected moderator. He also says, in telling of the 1807 session, p. 23, "The formation of the French Broad Association took from the Broad River the venerable Perminter Morgan, who became a member of the new body, and probably never crossed the mountains again to attend another session of his mother association."

his death. He was prominent also as pastor and evangelist and missionary.<sup>10</sup>

During this first period, 1800 to 1807, only three others were prominent in the sessions of the Association. One of these was William Lancaster, deacon of Cedar Springs Church, South Carolina, who since 1789 had been clerk of the Bethel Association, and was clerk of the Broad River from its organization in 1800 till 1811, when, on the discovery that he was a Free Mason, he was not re-elected.<sup>11</sup> Another was Thomas Burgess, minister of the Boiling Springs Church, Spartanburg County, South Carolina, who probably had a leading part in the organization of the Broad River Association at Sandy Run Church in 1800, and who, according to the records, was the moderator of the Association at its first annual meeting with Green Creek Church in 1801, and preached the introductory sermon in 1803. In 1801 he wrote the circular letter, his subject being, "Intemperance, a prevailing vice." According to Miss Townsend, Burgess "probably came from North Carolina," but he was in South Carolina as early as 1792, when he joined in the reconstitution of the South Carolina Boiling Springs Church near Spartanburg, and thereafter was active in the development of the Bethel Association.<sup>12</sup> Logan says that Burgess was a native of Maryland.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 73f. "Elder Drury Dobbins was a great favorite of the people,—married more couples, preached more funeral sermons, had more name-sakes, and preached the Gospel for less money (it is said he preached for Sandy Run Church forty years or more for about as many dollars,) and was less complained of than any other living man of his time. But notwithstanding all this he had his foibles to combat, just as other mortals have in this world of imperfection, and no one was more ready to acknowledge it than he was. But take him 'all in all' there were few men equal to Drury Dobbins."

<sup>11</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 26 f.

<sup>12</sup> *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 128 f.

<sup>13</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 274.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Another who had a part in the sessions of the Association in this first period was Elder Jacob Crocker, Jr., who had recently come to this section from Franklin County, North Carolina. In 1805 he preached the introductory sermon and in 1807 was moderator. According to Logan, Crocker "became a member first of State Line, then of El Bethel and last of Pacolet Church, all in Spartanburg County, South Carolina."<sup>14</sup> Logan gives this further account of Crocker's services:

He became a prominent minister of the Association, and was twice chosen to preside over the deliberations of the body in the sessions of 1807 and 1819. In 1805 at French Broad Church he preached the introductory sermon, and again in 1819 he performed the same service at Head of Tyger River. In the session of 1823 he prepared the circular letter addressed to the churches, on *the manner in which a church of Christ should proceed in calling a pastor or supply*. Soon after this he emigrated to Pickens County, Alabama, and died, having attained to a good old age.<sup>15</sup>

The Association of 1806 was rendered memorable because of the appearance as a delegate of the French Broad Church of Rev. Humphrey Posey, of whom something more will be said below in our accounts of the French Broad Association, which was formed in 1807, and of the work among the Cherokee Indians.

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<sup>14</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 279 f.

<sup>15</sup> The father of Jacob Crocker, Jacob Crocker, Sr., lived about five miles north of Louisburg, N. C. He built a church near his home, called Crocker's Meeting House, which was superseded by Haywood's Meeting House. He had a part in the organization of the Wake Union Baptist Church, one mile west of Wake Forest. Two of his sons were Baptist preachers, one of these being Thomas Crocker who long lived at Wake Forest. The other was Jacob Crocker who went to South Carolina. See statement by Rev. J. B. Solomon, *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, pp. 122-125, and sketch of Jacob Crocker, Sr., by President Charles E. Taylor, *Wake Forest Student*, Vol. XXV, p. 43 f.

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## XXI

### SYSTEM OF THE BROAD RIVER ASSOCIATION

In the year of its organization the Broad River Association, according to the usual custom, adopted what was called a "System," which as published in Logan's history<sup>1</sup> consisted of (1) an introduction, stating the character and advantages and uses of an association; (2) a constitution or plan of organization and representation of the churches, election of officers and their duties, rules of decorum for the conduct of meetings; and (3) an Abstract of Principles. In this comprehensive statement it is argued that the use of associations by Baptists is justified and desirable since they provide means of communication of saints with saints and of churches with churches, to a greater extent than would otherwise be possible. The statement continues:<sup>2</sup>

. . . In order more amply to obtain this blessing of communion, there ought to be a coalescing or uniting of several churches into one body, so far as their local situation and other circumstances will admit. But as it is impracticable for all the individual members, thus to associate and coalesce together, the churches should each, respectively, choose and delegate some of the most able, pious and judicious from among themselves, and particularly their ministers, to convene at such times and places as may be thought most conducive to the great end proposed, to act as their representatives

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<sup>1</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 13f.

<sup>2</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 14f.

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in the general assembly. Their expenses ought to be defrayed by the churches who send them.

These delegates, at their first meeting are, in a formal manner, to enter into covenant with each other as the representatives of the churches for the promoting of Christ's cause in general, and the interest of the churches they represent in particular. They should then form their plan of operations, and fix on the most proper place and time for meeting in future.

Although such a conjunction of churches is not expressly commanded in Scripture, yet it receives sufficient countenance and authority from the light of nature and the general laws of society, but more especially from a precedent established by the Apostolical authority, recorded Acts xvth chapt.

An association thus formed is a reputable body, as it represents not a city, country or nation, but the *Churches of Jesus Christ*. It is by no means to be deemed a superior judicature, vested with coercive power or authority over churches. It presumes not to impose its sentiments on its constituents, under pain of excommunication. Nor doth it anathematize those who do not implicitly submit to its determination, which would be nothing less than spiritual tyranny, and better comport with the arbitrary spirit of Popish councils than with that meekness which distinguishes the true disciples and humble followers of the lowly, yet adored *Jesus*. The apostles, elders, and brethren who composed the first christian councils, presumed not to impose their conclusions on the church in such a lordly manner, but preferred their determinations with this modest prologue. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. Acts xv. 28.

The Baptist Association arrogates no higher title than that of an *Advisory Council*; consistent with which epithet it ought ever to act, when it acts at all, without intruding on the rights of independent congregational churches, or usurping authority over them. Matt. xxiii. 10, 12. Nevertheless the association hath a natural and inalienable right to judge for itself what churches shall be admitted into confederacy with it, and to withdraw from all acts of communion and fellowship with any church so admitted, provided such church obstinately persists in holding corrupt principles, or indulging vicious practices, notwithstanding all proper endeavors have been used to reclaim it. Eph. v. 7; Rev. xviii. 4.

Such was the preamble, designed to justify the formation of associations by Baptist churches, and seeking to

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gain favor for them by a clear statement of their nature and the limitations of their powers. Like statements were made by other associations organized in these years, and it is evident that the writers of the Broad River "System" borrowed heavily from some of them.

Following this well-written preamble is a section consisting of the usual rules of decorum for the conduct of meetings, which closes with these articles:<sup>3</sup>

10th. Any matter proposed relative to the general good of the churches, should be seriously attended to.

11th. Every transaction should be conformable to the revealed will of God.

12th. A Circular Letter should be written and sent to all the churches in confederation, containing such instruction, information and advice as may be thought most suitable, and with which should be sent the transactions of the association.

There follows the statement: "The benefits arising from an association and communion of churches are many; in general, it tends to the maintaining of the truth, order and discipline of the Gospel." In eleven articles some of these benefits are told: An association may remove doubts on doctrinal points and prevent disputes; give salutary counsel; bring unity to the work; it may obtain redress for any brother who feels that he has been discriminated against; it will encourage the godly and orderly ministers and advertise the unsound and disorderly; it will aid the churches in the occasional interchange of their ministers; provide a program for the co-operation of the churches in sending the gospel to the destitute places; with open discussions of points of difference of opposing factions it will support those who are in the right; it will save the churches from the dominance of the heretical; it will put an end to the contention that may arise between church and church; and

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<sup>3</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 16.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

will help the churches in providing themselves with properly qualified ministers. "These and other advantages arising from an association must induce every godly church to desire union with such a body."

Last of all in the "System" is a statement of "Abstract of Principles," as follows: <sup>4</sup>

1. We believe in one only true and living God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three in one.
2. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by nature, by his own free will and holiness.
5. We believe in the doctrine of *Election* through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.
6. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God, only by the merits of Jesus Christ.
7. We believe the saints shall persevere in grace, and not finally fall away.
8. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of Jesus Christ, and that true believers are the only proper subjects, and conscientiously do believe the true mode is immersion.
9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgment.
10. We believe that the joys of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked will be eternal.
11. We believe that no minister has a right to the administration of the ordinances, only such as has been called of God, as was Aaron, and regularly baptized and approved of by the Church, and come under the imposition of hands by the Presbytery.
12. We believe that none but believers have a right to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Such was the "System" of the Broad River Association. It is of importance since it was generally adopted by associations later formed in the original territory of the Broad River Association, and many of its articles are written in the church record books of this region.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations from 1800 to 1882*, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> In beginning his *History of the South Fork Association*, Major W. A. Graham says, p. 6: "As the Baptists of the South Fork are the descendants



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An important matter in regard to this "System" of the Broad River Association not mentioned either by Logan or Graham is that it was not original with the Broad River Association, but was an adaptation with changes of a System or Plan already used by Baptist associations in all sections of the United States, of which some account has been given near the end of our chapter on the Yadkin Association, to which readers are referred. This Plan, or System, as we have seen, originated with the Regular Baptists who accepted the Philadelphia Confession and was no doubt designed to bring Baptists generally, their churches and associations, to accept the doctrines of the Philadelphia Confession. The Plan, or System, as a whole, proved of much help to Baptists in the organization and conduct of their new associations and churches. It was comprehensive, clear, and accurate in its statements. But, as told above, in one of its sections the original was a Calvinistic document, a declaration in favor of Election and the hyper-Calvinism of the Philadelphia Confession. The "Abstract of Articles of Faith," found at the end of the Plan, uses several of these articles to support this Doctrine of Election which was not acceptable to many Baptists, in particular the Separate Baptists, who in the organization of their associations and in declaring their principles repudiated the Doctrine of Election in the strongest terms. The Broad River was not a distinctive Separate Baptist association, but it did not accept the Articles of Faith of the Regular Baptists without modification. It rejected the article reading "We believe in the doctrine of eternal particular election," which they found among the Articles of Faith in the Model System offered them, and they continued to preach the soul-winning gospel that Shubal Stearns had preached. Some, however,

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of the Broad River Association, I insert the constitution, or as they termed it, 'System' of the Broad River Association, adopted at its organization in 1800."

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

like Perminter Morgan, finding the Methodists with their Arminianism obnoxious, became pronounced Calvinists. Later, as we shall see, fierce discussion arose in the French Broad Association which resulted in the formation of the Big Ivy Association, a Separate Baptist body, which won general acceptance for its contention that the Doctrine of Election should not be forced on Baptists.



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## XXII

### REVIVAL

Almost contemporaneous with the organization of the Broad River Association in the year 1800 was the coming to North Carolina of the Great Revival. Of the beginnings of this movement in Kentucky, and of it as it affected the Baptists of the Kehukee and Sandy Creek associations, some account has been given in the first volume of this work, pages 535 following, in which are included the statements of Elder George Pope of the Sandy Creek Association and of Elder Lemuel Burkitt of the Kehukee Association, two Baptist ministers who, each in his own association, had a prominent part in the Great Revival.

The Baptist historian Benedict<sup>1</sup> tells that in addition to 500 baptized by Pope in the Sandy Creek Association, "large numbers were also baptized by John Culpepper, William McGregore," and many other ministers laboring in the counties of Anson and Montgomery, the section of the Sandy Creek territory nearest the Broad River churches, with which they were in all probability in frequent communication. Doubtless, the progress of the revival in the Sandy Creek was well known to their Baptist brethren further south. It was as an extension of a work already in progress in central North Carolina and in the Sandy Creek Association that the Great Revival came to South Carolina

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 110f.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

and the churches of the Broad River Association, and its characteristics were those already described.<sup>2</sup>

In the south as well as in the north there were two classes of meetings. One class consisted of general meetings, in which the Presbyterians usually had the leading part, but in which they were united with the Methodists both in preaching and in the communion of the Lord's Supper, which was a regular feature of these general meetings, and in which some Baptist ministers, on invitation, also preached but took no part in the communion. The other class of meetings were the camp-meetings such as already were in use in Baptist churches and continued for more than a half century to be used in the more thinly settled sections of North Carolina. Benedict, in his *History of the Baptists*,<sup>3</sup> tells something of the general nature of the camp-meetings of the Baptists and also those of the Methodists which differed in some respects from those of the Baptists.

This work was not confined to the Baptists, but prevailed, at the same time, amongst the Methodists and Presbyterians, both of which denominations were considerably numerous in the parts. These two last denominations, soon after the commencement of the revival, united in their communion and camp-meetings. The Baptists were strongly solicited to embark in the general communion scheme; but they, pursuant to their consistent (many call them rigid) principles, declined a compliance. But they had camp or field-meetings amongst themselves, and many individuals of them united with the Methodists and Presbyterians in theirs. The Baptists established camp-meetings from motives of convenience and necessity, and relinquished them as soon as they were no longer needful. Their meeting-houses are generally small, and surrounded with groves of wood, which they carefully preserve, for the advantage of the cooling shade, which they afford in the heat of summer. In these groves the stages were erected, around which the numerous congregation encamped; and when they could be accommodated in the meeting-houses, to them they repaired. A circumstance which led the people to come prepared to encamp on the ground was, that those who lived adjacent to the place of meeting, although willing to provide for the refreshment, as far as

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<sup>2</sup> Vol. I, pp. 535 f.

<sup>3</sup> II, p. 108f.



they were able, of the numerous congregations which assembled; yet, in most cases, they would have found it impracticable; and furthermore, they wished to be at the meetings themselves, what time they must have stayed at home for the purpose. The people, therefore, would be advised by their ministers and others, at the first camp-meetings, to come to the next and all succeeding ones, prepared to accommodate and refresh themselves. In this way, camp-meetings were instituted amongst the Baptists.

In nearly the same way, meetings of a similar nature were established by the united body of Methodists and Presbyterians in these parts; but like many other things produced on extraordinary occasions, they continued after the call for them had ceased. Their efficacy was by many too highly estimated. They had witnessed at them, besides much confusion and disorder, many evident and remarkable displays of divine power; and their ardour in promoting them, after the zeal which instituted them had abated, indicated that they considered them the most probable means of effecting a revival. From these motives (I am induced to think) camp-meetings have been, and are still, [1812] industriously kept up by the Methodists throughout the United States. It is well known that they take much pains, by giving lengthy notice of their approach, by advertising them in newspapers, &c. to collect as large an assemblage of people as possible, and then, by preconcerted and artful manoeuvres, and by a mechanical play upon the passions, to produce that animation and zeal, which, at the times above-mentioned, were spontaneous and unaffected.

In the progress of the revival among the Baptists, and, especially, at their camp-meetings, there were exhibited scenes of the most solemn and affecting nature; and in many instances there was heard at the same time, throughout the vast congregation, a mingled sound of prayer, exhortation, groans, and praise. The fantastick exercise of jerking, dancing, &c. in a religious way, prevailed much with the united body of Methodists and Presbyterians, towards the close of the revival; but they were not introduced at all among the Baptists in these parts. But falling down under religious impressions was frequent among them. Many were taken with these religious epilepsies, if we may so call them, not only at the great meetings, where those scenes were exhibited, which were calculated to move the sympathetick affections; but also about their daily employments, some in the fields, some in their houses, and some when hunting their cattle in the woods. And in some cases, people were thus strangely affected when alone; so that if some played the hypocrite, with others the exercise must have been involuntary and unaffected. And besides falling down, there were many other expressions of zeal, which in more moderate people would be considered enthusiastick and wild.

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The nature of a general revival of the Presbyterians and Methodists during the Great Revival may be learned from the letter of Dr. Richard Furman, reprinted by Benedict from Rippon's *Baptist Register* of London, which is given in the footnote.<sup>4</sup> The first and best known of the general

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<sup>4</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 167 f. "*A Letter from Dr. Furman of Charleston, to Dr. Rippon of London.*"

"*Charleston, 11th Aug. 1802.*"

"*Rev. and dear Sir,*

"Having promised you some information respecting the extraordinary meeting at the Waxhaws, to which I purposed going at the time I wrote in May, and having accordingly attended it, I now sit down to perform my promise.

"It was appointed by the Presbyterian clergy in that part of the country, but clergymen of other denominations were invited to it; and it was proposed to be conducted on the same principles and plan with those held in Kentucky. The place of meeting is about 170 miles from Charleston, in the midst of a large settlement of Presbyterians, but not far distant from some congregations of Baptists and Methodists. This Presbyterian congregation is one of the first which were formed in the upper parts of this State; has for its pastor a Mr. Brown, who is a respectable character; and is furnished with a commodious place of worship. But as the place of worship would not be in any wise equal to the numbers expected, a place was chosen in the forest for an encampment. The numbers which assembled from various parts of the country, formed a very large congregation, the amount of which has been variously estimated; to me there appeared to be 3000, or perhaps 4000 persons; but some supposed there were 7000 or 8000. My information respecting the number of ministers who attended, was probably not correct; but from what I observed, and collected from others, there were 11 Presbyterians, 4 Baptists, and 3 Methodists. The encampment was laid out in an oblong form, extending from the top of a hill down the south side of it, toward a stream of water, which ran at the bottom in an eastern direction, including a vacant space of about 300 yards in length and 150 in breadth. Lines of tents were erected on every side of this space; and between them, and behind, were the waggons and riding carriages placed; the space itself being reserved for the assembling of the congregation, or congregations rather, to attend publick worship. Two stands were fixed on for this purpose: at the one, a stage was erected under some lofty trees, which afforded an ample shade; at the other, which was not so well provided with shade, a wagon was placed for the rostrum.

"The publick service began on Friday afternoon, the 21st of May, with a sermon by the Rev. Dr. M'Corckel, of the Presbyterian church; after which, the congregation was dismissed: but at the same time the hearers were informed, that they would be visited at their tents, and exhorted by the ministers, during the course of the evening. To this information an exhortation was added, that they would improve the time in religious conversation, earnest prayer, and singing the praises of God. This mode of improving the time, both by the ministers and a large proportion of the hearers, was strictly adhered to: not only were exhortations given, but many sermons also were preached along the lines in the evening; and the exercises continued, by the ministers in general, till midnight; and by the Methodist ministers, among their adherents, nearly or quite all the night.

revival meetings in this section of North Carolina and South Carolina was that at the Waxhaws described by Furman. But there were others. "Not far from Rutherford court-house there was another general meetings the first of June,

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"On Saturday morning, the ministers assembled, after an early breakfast, and appointed a committee to arrange the services for that day and the two following. The committee consisted wholly of Presbyterian ministers. They soon performed the work of their appointment, and assigned the several ministers present their respective parts of the service. By this arrangement, two publick services were appointed at each stand for that day; three for the Sabbath, together with the administration of the communion, at a place a little distant from the encampment; and two at each stand again for Monday. The intervals, and evenings in particular, to be improved in the same manner as on the former day. Necessary business calling me away on Sunday evening, I did not see the conclusion of the meeting. This, however, I can say, it was conducted with much solemnity, while I was at it; and the engagedness of the people appeared to be great. Many seemed to be seriously concerned for the salvation of their souls; and the preaching and exhortations of the ministers in general were well calculated to inspire right sentiments, and make right impressions. In the intervals of publick worship, the voice of praise was heard among the tents in every direction, and frequently that of prayer by private Christians. The communion service was performed with much apparent devotion, while I attended, which was at the serving of the first table. The Presbyterians and Methodists sat down together; but the Baptists, on the principle which has generally governed them on this subject, abstained. Several persons suffered at this meeting those bodily affections, which have been before experienced at Kentucky, North-Carolina, and at other places, where the extraordinary revivals in religion within this year or two have taken place. Some of them fell instantaneously, as though struck with lightning, and continued insensible for a length of time; others were more mildly affected, and soon recovered their bodily strength, with a proper command of their mental powers, Deep conviction for sin, and apprehension of the wrath of God, was professed by the chief of them at first; and several of them afterwards appeared to have a joyful sense of pardoning mercy through a Redeemer. Others continued under a sense of condemnation, after those extraordinary bodily affections ceased; and some from the first, appeared to be more affected with the greatness and goodness of God, and with the love of Christ, than with apprehensions of divine wrath. In a few cases there were indications, as I conceived, of enthusiasm, and even affectation; but in others a strong evidence of supernatural power and gracious influence. Several received the impression in their tents; others in a still more retired situation, quite withdrawn from company; some, who had been to that moment in opposition to what was thus going on, under the character of the work of God; and others, who had been till then careless. The number of persons thus affected, while I was present, was not great in proportion to the multitude attending. I have, indeed, been informed several more were affected the evening after I came away, and the next day; but in all, they could not be equal to the proportional numbers which were thus affected at some other meetings, especially in Kentucky. Several, indeed a very considerable number, had gone 70 or 80 miles from the lower parts of this State to attend this meeting; of these a pretty large proportion came under the above described impressions; and since their return to their houses, an



## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

1802.”<sup>5</sup> Another such meeting was that at Nazareth Church, Spartanburg County, called by the Presbyterians for Friday, July 2, 1802, and attended by thirteen Presbyterian preachers and an unknown number of Methodist and Baptist preachers; the attendance was five or six thousand. A general meeting at Hanging Rock, just south of the North Carolina-South Carolina state line, was under the control of the Methodists. “There were fifteen ministers, Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, with about three thousand people.”<sup>6</sup> The number of Baptist preachers in attendance at these general meetings was relatively small

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extraordinary revival has taken place in the congregations to which they belong. It has spread also across the upper parts of this State, in a western direction. There are some favorable appearances in several of the Baptist churches; but my accounts of them are not particular enough to be transmitted. Taking it for granted that you have seen the publication entitled ‘Surprising Accounts,’ by Woodward, of Philadelphia, containing the accounts of revivals in Kentucky, Tennessee, and North-Carolina, I therefore say nothing of them; but only, that the work in North-Carolina increases greatly; opposition however is made by many; and I am informed that the congregation, of which I have been writing so much, (that at the Waxhaws) is likely to be divided on account of it; and that Mr. Brown has been shut out of the place of worship since the meeting was held there, by some, I suppose a majority, of his elders and adherents. A particular reason of the offence taken by them, as I have understood, was the practice of communing with the Methodists. Having mentioned this denomination frequently, I think it proper to say, that it is that class of Methodists who are followers of Mr. Wesley, which is intended; few of the followers of Mr. Whitefield are to be found in the United States, not at least as congregations. These general meetings have a great tendency to excite the attention, and engage it to religion. Were there no other argument in their favour, this alone would carry a great weight with a reflecting mind; but there are many more which may be urged. At the same time, it must be conceded that there are some incidental evils which attend them, and give pain to one who feels a just regard for religion. Men of an enthusiastick disposition have a favourable opportunity at them of diffusing their spirit, and they do not fail to improve the opportunity for this purpose; and the too free intercourse between the sexes in such an encampment is unfavourable. However, I hope the direct good obtained from these meetings will much more than counterbalance the incidental evil.

“I am, reverend and dear Sir, your friend and servant in the gospel,

RICHARD FURMAN.”

<sup>5</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 298, quoting Rev. James Jenkins, a Methodist minister. Griffin, *History of Old Tryon and Rutherford Counties, North Carolina—1730-1930*, p. 591, says that the place was eight and one-half miles from Rutherford.

<sup>6</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 298, again quoting Jenkins.



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and in all of them they refused to join in the communion services with the other denominations. In 1802 the Bethel Association, and in 1804 the Broad River Association gave emphatic negatives to the query: "Will the Scriptures tolerate us to hold a member in fellowship who communes with Pedo-Baptists?" It was doubtless because the communion services were a regular feature of the general meetings that only a few Baptist ministers took an active part in them. It was in meetings in their own churches that Baptists joined in the work. These meetings, we are told, were many and successful.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Townsend, *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 299: "Baptist ministers apparently did not call general meetings but held frequent and successful gatherings in their own congregations. These claim that the violent exercises seldom appeared among their converts, and that with the Baptists the revival proceeded in an orderly and truly spiritual manner."

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## XXIII

### AFTER THE REVIVAL

No detailed accounts of revival meetings in the North Carolina churches of the Broad River Association have been found; it is only results that are reported. The records show in 1802 the churches of the Broad River Association reported 477 baptisms, in 1803 686, in 1804 133, a total for the three years of 1,296, while in the Bethel, the parent association, with a much larger number of churches, in 1803 alone the number baptized was 1,411. In 1805 only six baptisms were reported for the Broad River, a clear indication that the Great Revival was over. During the years of the Revival the number of churches had increased to twenty-nine, seven new churches having been admitted in 1803. In that year also the total number of members had become 2,084, more than double the 959 reported for 1801. In 1804 two more new churches were admitted, but due to emigration to the west, of which some account will be given below, the number of members had fallen to 2,000; in 1805 no new church was added, and the number of members showed a decrease of 206, and had become 1,794; in 1806, one new church was admitted, Cane Creek in Buncombe County, a church established the year before by Rev. Humphrey Posey, who came as a representative of his church, and began his brief connection with the Association. The number of churches was now thirty, the membership 1,666. At the next meeting of the Association, that of 1807

## AFTER THE REVIVAL

at Greens Creek Church, Rutherford County, Cane Creek Church and two other churches of the Association west of the Blue Ridge, French Broad and Caney River, were dismissed to join in the formation of the French Broad Association, thus ending the period when the Broad River had its greatest territorial extent.

It is well to say here that though no other churches were dismissed until 1827, the Broad River Association continued to lose members, and after ten years, in 1817, the number of its churches was still twenty-seven, but not in all cases identical churches, since at least six new churches had been admitted to take the place of a like number which had either become extinct or lost to the Association on some other account. In 1804, a decrease of eighty-four in the number of members was reported, and thereafter for every year, until 1818, except two, when there were revivals resulting in 90 and 352 additions, a decrease in the number of members was reported. The low was 1,182 in 1811, only a net gain of 223 in ten years. Revivals in some of the churches beginning in 1812 brought the number to 1,624 in 1813, which had dropped to 1,442 in 1817.

Doubtless several causes contributed to these almost constant reported losses in membership by the churches in this period. Benedict's account<sup>1</sup> is:

. . . Great numbers have removed beyond the mountains, to the western States and territories; and in the course of five years, viz. from 1803 to 1808, there were excommunicated from the churches in this Association 285 persons; which circumstance proves that they received much chaff with the precious grain, as is too often the case in such great ingatherings; it also proves that they have used a commendable degree of diligence in winnowing it out, when it was discovered.

Probably Benedict is correct in stating that among the "excommunicated" was much chaff of the Great Revival,

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<sup>1</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 159.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

that is, those who made professions of religion hurriedly and without change of heart, and on their professions were admitted to the churches and baptized. How large a part of those who were excluded from churches at this time were of this character is uncertain, but the records of the churches of this and of other associations show it was often found necessary to exclude many on other charges, some doctrinal, some moral. Seemingly, elaborate communion services to which the full Sunday morning period of the Great Revival meetings of the Presbyterians and Methodists were devoted, proved enticing to many Baptists to depart from the well known faith and practice of their churches and accept the kind and urgent invitations to join in the solemn services; if so, they were afterwards called to account by their churches, which, acting in conformity with the emphatic approval of the associations, the Bethel and the Broad River, excluded them from their membership. How many were excluded on this charge is unknown, but certainly it was established that no one could retain his membership in one of their churches who did not walk in all the commands and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.

Doubtless the greater number of the 285 "excommunicated" mentioned by Benedict were those who in their daily life and conduct did not conform to the standards of clean living required by the churches. The record books of Baptist churches in all sections of the State show that for many years following Independence Won they had to contend with much general demoralization, of which some account is taken in another chapter. In the Broad River Association conditions were much the same as on the Yadkin. Its territory had been the scene of strife and turmoil. Intoxicated by their newly won political freedom many lost a sense of responsibility for their actions. All public gatherings, except those of a religious nature, tended to become scenes of rowdiness and drunken brawls, with the bully of



## AFTER THE REVIVAL

the section ranging the grounds and challenging and threatening those whom he thought weaker than himself, while often the regularly appointed officers of the law looked on helplessly and complacently. Treating with brandy and whiskey was a common way of winning votes in the elections of civil officers. The situation with reference to strong drink is thus described by Logan, the historian of the Association:<sup>2</sup>

About the time the Broad River Association was organized in 1800 the demon of intemperance is said to have held high carnival throughout the entire bounds of the body and many of the members of churches were claimed by him as special devotees, and it is only too true when we say they were often found worshipping at his filthy shrines. Our fathers had gallantly succeeded in removing from their shoulders the shackles of British tyranny; but now alas! they had to encounter and grapple with a foe more vicious and demoralizing. The Broad River Association at its first session in 1801 at Green's Creek, commenced a defensive movement by requiring their venerable presiding officer Elder *Thomas Burgess*, to issue an address or *Circular Letter* to the several churches in union in the name of the Association warning them to be on the alert and to beware of the seducing and dangerous effects of this now popular demon. In that address the Moderator exhorts the brethren to "keep their bodies in subjection, watch against unlawful desires, and oppose within themselves, all unlawful appetites and refrain from shameful and outbreking practices, &c."

Such were the dangerous demoralizing conditions existing at this time, not only in this section but in other early settlements of which some notice has been taken. Its most serious aspect was that officers of the state were unable and, in some cases, unwilling to check the progress of these evil tendencies. But the churches of the Broad River Association recognized the peril, and determined to do battle with it. This they did effectually by the instruction and discipline of their churches. The disorderly member was reported to the regular monthly meetings and brought to

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<sup>2</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 9.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

book, and often excluded from the church. Doubtless many of the "excommunications," as Benedict calls them, following the Great Revival period were of this kind.

However, it was from another cause, not one of moral or doctrinal delinquency, that the churches of the Broad River section and most other sections of the Carolinas lost much the greater number of members in the early years. This was emigration. In the Broad River Association the records show that letters of dismissal, granted chiefly to emigrating members, numbered 224 in 1804, 124 in 1805, 131 in 1806, a total of 479 in these three years. Though no other such large losses due to emigration are reported thereafter, such losses checking the development of the churches of the Broad River Association continued; in fact, the emigration movement, which was so often said to be the bane of North Carolina in the years before the Civil War, affected the progress of Baptist churches in all sections of the State and in none more greatly than in the Broad River region, through which streams of emigrants poured. A Baptist was as free to emigrate as any other citizen. Due to the fact that Baptist churches are independent, any Baptist church was free to move when a majority of its members so willed; they only needed a minister and leader, such as Joseph Parker, William Sojourner, Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall, Philip Mulky, or Tidence Lane, to continue their work in a new land.

It was a different situation when churches already established and functioning lost members in such numbers as to weaken them and sometimes to bring them to extinction. The Baptist churches in all associations of North Carolina began to suffer in this way very early. Within less than a score of years after the coming of Shubal Stearns and his church of Separate Baptists to Sandy Creek in 1755 came the greatest and most important emigration of Baptists of all times—that which followed the cruel measures of Tryon

## AFTER THE REVIVAL

after the Battle of Alamance. As an account of this movement has already been given in Volume I of this work, Chapter XVI, readers are referred to that, only recalling that according to the statement of Morgan Edwards, who visited this section the same year, the membership of the church at Sandy Creek was reduced from 606 to 14 and it was "in danger of becoming extinct." In the church of Little River, Anson County, the membership of 500 was reduced to a mere handful, and the large membership of Great Cohara Church was reduced to eight because "the troubles of the Regulation compelled them to leave the Province." However, in its final result, this scattering abroad of the Baptists has been the multiplication of Baptist churches throughout the South.

After the close of the War of the Revolution the emigration movement began again and before the end of the century was affecting all parts of North Carolina, and in particular the Baptists. Even before the close of the war, Baptist ministers were leaving North Carolina churches and going west. In 1781 John Tanner left the church long called by his name in Warren County, now Warren Plains, for Kentucky. In 1795, John Dillahunty, who had long been preaching in the Trent section, felt a "sudden and powerful impulse," for all his advanced age, and moved to Tennessee. In 1797, Elder William Phipps, minister of Coor Creek Church, Craven County, likewise went to Tennessee. Probably the most serious losses because of emigration in the Broad River Association were those already reported—224 in 1804, 124 in 1805 and 131 in 1806, a total of 479 for the three years—but such losses continued for many years longer. We thus see that emigration caused losses in membership to the Baptists in all sections of North Carolina, and doubtless the situation was similar in other eastern states. From Baptist associations in eastern North Carolina year by year, many members of the churches and

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

many Baptist ministers were going to Tennessee and other western regions. In the extreme eastern part of the state as well as in the western, "emigration was the order of the day." The record of the Chowan Association, formed in 1806, is as indicative of this as that of the Broad River. The minutes of this association for the years of this period show that while emigration was not so great as to cause the extinction of churches, as sometimes was the case in the west, it was no less constant and doubtless checked Baptist progress in the section.

That the loss of membership was due to emigration is clearly revealed by the statistical reports of the churches of the Chowan Association in these years. In 1806 the Association was organized with 18 churches, which reported 1,839 members; in 1807 there were 19 churches and 1,947 members; in 1808 there were 20 churches and 1,780 members; in 1809 there were 21 churches and 1,780 members. In 1811 there were 23 churches, but there was no further increase until 1824, when the churches numbered 24. In only three years before 1823 did the Chowan Association report as many members as it had at its organization in 1806. On the other hand, during this period the churches of the Association reported a great number of baptisms, more than 60 every year except two, and more than 100 in eleven of the twenty years following its organization in 1806. It might have been expected that with so many baptisms the membership would nearly have doubled. That it did not was due largely to the fact that during all these years the members were leaving the churches of the Chowan Association with letters, the number of those dismissed by letter in nearly every year greatly exceeding the number received by letter. For instance, in the year 1808 when there were 80 baptisms, the number received by letter was 12, the number dismissed by letter 52; in 1819, when there were



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70 baptisms in the 22 churches, the numbers received and dismissed by letter were 14 and 39 respectively; in 1824, the number of baptisms was 351, of those received by letter the number was 25, of those dismissed by letter, 77.



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## XXIV

### BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

After the dismissal of the three churches west of the Blue Ridge to join in the formation of the French Broad Association in 1807, it was twenty years before the Broad River Association dismissed another group of churches to form the Catawba River Association in 1827. These twenty years constitute a new era. In this new period the Association was to push its development northward to the Catawba River and beyond to meet the southward Baptist development from the churches in the upper Yadkin Valley and expand and enlarge the work already begun towards the south and east.

The loss of the French Broad territory entailed also the loss of the ministers who served churches in that territory. Among these the best known were the veteran Perminter Morgan of the French Broad Church and the young Humphrey Posey who had been the delegate of Cane Creek Church, which he had constituted in 1805, and which had joined the Association in 1806. The worth of both was recognized and there was deep regret at their loss.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 22: "This year (1806) is to be remembered in our history for giving to us first as an Association, and afterwards to the churches of this state, and our neighboring state of Georgia the ministerial labors of that excellent and successful preacher of the Gospel, Elder Humphrey Posey." P. 23: "The formation of the French Broad Association took from the Broad River the venerable Perminter Morgan, who became a member of the new body, and probably never crossed the mountains again to attend another session of the mother association." Sketches of both Posey and Morgan are given elsewhere.

## BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

The records show that the Broad River Association, though suffering losses of members and churches because of emigration, still continued its work with undiminished courage and resolution. After the division a respectable number of able and enthusiastic ministers remained in the Association, some of them veterans who were laboring in this region many years before the organization of the Association, and others, young men generally lacking in the education of the schools, but some of them inferior to none in native ability and zeal. Among the ministers who in 1807 and years following had charge of South Carolina churches in the Association were: Joseph Camp, George Brewton, Jacob Crocker, Moses Holland, Joshua Richards, Benjamin Hicks, Joroyal Barnett, David Forest, and Zachariah Blackwell.

Joseph Camp, as related above, reputedly organized the Buffalo Church as early as 1772, and had been in charge of it since that time, with his residence near the church, possibly in North Carolina. In 1808, after thirty-six years of fruitful service as minister of Buffalo he emigrated to Kentucky and remained there until his death.<sup>2</sup> Joroyal Barnett was pastor of Cedar Springs Church in Spartanburg County, and in 1802 was delegate of that church at the Association; in 1811 he was moderator; afterward, there is no further record of him. Rev. Jacob Crocker was a native of North Carolina; of him some account has been given above. After coming to the section of the Broad River Association his ministerial charges were mostly in South Carolina churches, first at State Line, and then in order, El Bethel and Pacolet. He did distinguished service in all.

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<sup>2</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 278: "Elder Camp was respectably connected and has left numerous relatives in Spartanburg County, S. C., and in Cleveland and Rutherford counties, N. C." He also "left two sons in the ministry whom he had baptized" and in whose ordination he had had a part. These were Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks.

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About the end of 1823 he emigrated to Pickens County, Alabama.

Elder David Forest was a pioneer minister who in 1800 helped organize the Broad River Association. Asplund lists him as a licentiate of the Head of the Enoree Church, and according to Logan he was minister of that church as late as 1808. "We have no means of ascertaining when he was born, or where he hailed from; nor when he died and went to his reward."<sup>3</sup> George Brewton was a pioneer minister of Friendship Church, Spartanburg County (founded in 1765).<sup>4</sup> He appears as a delegate in 1805, and regularly thereafter until 1815, the year of his death. In 1812 he was moderator. The minutes of the Association for the year 1815 refer to him as "our venerable and worthy brother in Christ . . . an humble Christian, a pious minister, a nursing father in Zion, a good citizen, a loving husband, a tender parent, and a friend to the needy."

Joshua Richards was among the pioneer ministers of the Broad River section. It seems well established that he was a native of North Carolina; that early in life he made a considerable fortune trading in slaves; that he came into possession of large and profitable plantations near the present town of Gaffney, with neighbors known for their wealth, intelligence and culture; that on coming to South Carolina he was pastor of Goucher Creek Church near Gaffney, which he served for about twenty years until 1811;<sup>5</sup> that

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<sup>3</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 381.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Townsend in *South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 134, says that he probably came from North Carolina.

<sup>5</sup> Both Logan and Miss Townsend make confusing statements about the date of Richards' coming to South Carolina and assuming the pastorate of Goucher Creek Church. Both say that after "about twenty years" of service as pastor of that church he became the pastor of Providence Church in 1812. But Miss Townsend, p. 131, accepts a statement of Logan, p. 504, that "Richards came well recommended to Goucher Creek Church, about the year 1800 and joined that church by letter, and was chosen their pastor for upwards of twenty years." If Richards was pastor of Goucher Creek for more than twenty years before going to Providence, he began his



in 1812 he became pastor of Providence Church, one and one-half miles north of Gaffney, which he served until 1840; and that he died in 1846, aged about 90 years. All say that he was very efficient and useful all his life as a minister, "except in his last years, when his extreme old age rendered him quite childish."<sup>6</sup>

Elder Zachariah Blackwell was among the earlier preachers of the Broad River section. According to Miss Townsend,<sup>7</sup> he is listed in the First Federal Census, that of 1790, "without slaves." Before 1799 he was licensed to preach by the State Line Church, which he probably helped to organize in 1796. In 1803 he was pastor of this church; in 1822 he joined the Bucks Creek Church and had pastoral care of it for two years,<sup>8</sup> after which he returned to State Line Church and served as its pastor, 1824-1831,<sup>9</sup> being zealous in preaching the gospel until extreme old age. He was a minister of a type not infrequently found among the Baptists, when they had no schools for their education.

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pastorate of Goucher as early as 1792. Another statement of Logan's (p. 567) is "The Goucher Creek Church does not appear to have had any regular pastor until 1784 when Elder Joshua Richards was engaged, and who continued until 1811." This would indicate that Richards came to South Carolina as early as 1784.

<sup>6</sup>Excerpts from Logan's sketch of Richards, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 504 f., follow: "One of his singularities as a man was that though . . . he kept good horses, yet he did the most of his traveling on foot. . . . He said he (walked) to Florida and back. . . . In person, Elder Richards was a very large man—not corpulent, but very coarse features, and possessing great physical strength. . . . As a preacher, Elder Richards had a peculiar sort of declamation, partaking of the 'sing-song' style, with a voice very loud and harsh, especially to ears polite or refined. . . . Elder Richards' singing, if any odds, was more objectionable to the ear than his preaching, having, as he had, a very harsh voice, and being entirely tuneless. At the Associations, or big meetings, he had a habit of strolling through the congregations, and singing in his peculiar way . . . much to the amusement of the juvenile portion of the assemblages. . . . As a neighbor and citizen he was highly esteemed and beloved, with one consent all believed him to be a Christian. . . ."

<sup>7</sup>*South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 207, footnote.

<sup>8</sup>Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 559.

<sup>9</sup>Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 574.

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Such preachers had great influence and are historically important.<sup>10</sup>

Among those serving North Carolina churches were Joel Blackwell, John Blackwell, Ambrose Carlton, David Doyale, John Dalton, Thomas Justice, Jacob Holyfield, Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks, and Hosea Holcombe.

Joel and John Blackwell are said to have been brothers, both of whom were soldiers in the Revolution. They lived in the Green Creek section of what was then Rutherford County, and were leaders in the movement that led to the formation of the Broad River Association. Both did long service, and continued to represent their churches in the meetings of the Association until well into the 1830's. Neither was a gifted preacher. Of Rev. Joel Blackwell Logan says,<sup>11</sup>

The date of his birth is unknown to us. His style or manner of preaching was said to be of the sing-song character. He was

<sup>10</sup> In his biographical sketches Logan often tells of the veneration with which they were regarded. In his sketch of Blackwell, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 268, he quotes from the history of M. C. Barnett, an earlier historian of the Association, as follows: "At the session of 1842, at El Bethel Church, I saw Elder Blackwell for the last time. He was very old; but still he had not thrown off the mantle of his calling; I remember yet the veneration I felt for him; when, after the association adjourned, he came out of the house and pulled off his hat, and standing in the yard he published that he would preach at such a place at such a time. His head was as white as cotton, his voice weak and tremulous, and his whole physical appearance that of a man standing on the brink of the grave. His dress was coarse and well worn, but still there was a dignity of virtue and an air of majesty about him that captivated, even while it subdued. He died in the course of that year, and his grave, which is in the neighborhood of Cherokee Ford, on Broad River, has remained without anything to mark it until two years ago when, at the suggestion of Bro. Wm. Curtis, the Association resolved to erect a tombstone at his grave, with a suitable inscription to his memory, and immediately raised money in the body for that purpose.

"As a preacher he had nothing of the polish of oratory about him, but having made the Bible his principal study, he always preached as a scribe well instructed in the kingdom—never being at loss for an apt quotation of Scripture in support of anything he advanced; with a melting pathos and sound sense his sermons could but be as they were, both interesting and instructive. If he had been favored with the advantages of an early training he would no doubt have been one of the shining lights of his day."

<sup>11</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 270 f.

## BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

of robust, heavy build, pleasant and affable manners; and although not an able preacher, yet devotedly pious and useful in the times he lived.<sup>12</sup>

His sing-song style was doubtless an inheritance from the Separates of Sandy Creek, which even to this day many Primitive Baptist preachers, loyal to tradition, use for at least a sentence or two of every sermon. Both Griffin and Logan give a similar account of Rev. John Blackwell; Logan closes his remarks about him<sup>13</sup> with the statement, "The old preacher is said to have been a good man, but not gifted."

Ambrose Carlton was a pioneer minister and useful servant of the Broad River Association who three times served it as moderator, twice preached the introductory sermon, and was also entrusted with the preparation of circular letters on such subjects as *The Duties of Deacons* (1807), and *The Scriptural reasons why the Baptists do not commune with other denominations of Christians*, (1815). His membership was with the Smyrna Church, which withdrew from the Broad River Association to join in the formation of the Catawba River Association in 1828, an event which he probably survived inasmuch as there is no mention of his death in the minutes of the Broad River Association. That his death occurred soon thereafter is indicated by the fact that in 1829 the Catawba River Association appointed a committee "to attend Smyrna and assist them in the ordination of a minister."<sup>14</sup> Logan says,<sup>15</sup> "He had the reputation of being an able preacher and exemplary christian."

Another able minister of the Association in its early years was Elder David Doyale, who was a member of the New

<sup>12</sup> See also Patton, *The Story of Henderson County*, p. 67.

<sup>13</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 274.

<sup>14</sup> Poe, *Historical Sketch, Catawba River Baptist Association*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 279.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Salem Church. His ability is indicated by the fact that he preached the introductory sermon in 1809. He represented his church in the Association until 1817, but, says Logan,<sup>16</sup>

When he was born, or where he died, we have no means of ascertaining now. His name is preserved, however, by several namesakes he has, which is some evidence of his being highly esteemed as a minister of Christ.

Elder John Dalton was a member of the Association as early as 1802, when he served as a delegate of the Bill's Creek Church, Rutherford County, and continued as such until 1811. The indications are that in his last years he was superannuated.<sup>17</sup>

Thomas Justice was yet another pioneer minister of Rutherford County of that day, and he was the earliest of those bearing that name who have done so much for the advancement of the Baptist cause both to the east and the west of the Blue Ridge.

Of Elder Jacob Holyfield, Logan says:<sup>18</sup> "We have no information as to the date of his birth or death, or his qualifications as a minister." We do know, however, that in 1808 he was a delegate to the associational meeting from Concord Church in Rutherford County, and in 1811 a delegate from the Ebenezer Church. Later he seems to have left the region of the Broad River Association, probably going to that of the French Broad, from which he was a delegate to the 1841 and several subsequent sessions of the Catawba River Association.<sup>19</sup>

In 1815, Hosea Holcombe organized a church, which from its location at "the Mountain" in Lincoln County, was first called Mountain Meeting House. According to Gra-

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<sup>16</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 346.

<sup>17</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Association, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 340.

<sup>18</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 429.

<sup>19</sup> See Poe, *A Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Association*, p. 6 f.



## BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

ham,<sup>20</sup> Holcombe was a native of Virginia, born in 1780. Graham does not indicate at what time he came to North Carolina, but says, "He was the most influential and, probably, best educated minister of his time." He was with the church he founded for only five years, at the end of which he moved to Alabama where, until his death in 1841, he was an able minister and leader in Baptist work in that state.<sup>21</sup> Up to the time of his removal he was active in the Broad River Association of which his church became a member in the year of its constitution. He was scheduled to give the introductory sermon in 1816, but yielded to Luther Rice, who visited the Association in that year. In 1817 he wrote the circular letter, "The Declension of Religion and the Causes thereof," which, says Logan,<sup>22</sup> "is a document that should be put in the hands of every member of Christ's church." The church which Holcombe founded was later moved to a location in Burke County, about five miles northwest of Hickory, and the name changed first to Union, and then in 1858, to Warlick's, under which name it has since continued.

About the time of the withdrawal of the churches west of the Blue Ridge, two other relatively young ministers of the Broad River Association were coming into prominence. These were Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks. For nearly all their lives they were associated in their labors. Dobbins was born in York County, South Carolina, on April 7, 1776, Hicks in the adjoining County of Spartanburg on July 1, 1778. In their early years both were baptized by Elder Joseph Camp into the membership of the Buffalo Church. Both afterwards became members of the

<sup>20</sup> Graham, *History of the South Fork Association*, p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> See Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, for an account of Holcombe who is listed, probably erroneously, as a native of North Carolina. Cathcart's statement that Holcombe worked in "upper South Carolina" probably is due to the fact that the Broad River Association included South Carolina churches.

<sup>22</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 35.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

State Line (South Carolina) Church, seemingly at the time of its organization, about 1796, which church, according to Logan,<sup>23</sup> became the "nursing mother" of both, that is, trained them in morals and doctrine, gave them aspirations for service, licensed them to preach, and afterwards called them to ordination for the full work of the Gospel ministry, Dobbins before 1803, and Hicks in 1808. From its first years both were attendants on the meetings of the Association, Hicks being a lay delegate and Dobbins a ministerial delegate in 1803, and from soon thereafter, as long as they lived, both had prominent parts in the sessions of the Association. Dobbins was moderator, first in 1810, again in 1813, 1814, 1816, and thereafter with exceptions of a very few years until 1845, twenty-five or twenty-six years in all; he preached the introductory sermon in 1807, 1813, 1817, 1822, 1826, 1830, 1833, 1838, and 1842—nine times; he wrote circular letters, several of which were republished, in 1816, 1821, 1829, 1835, 1838 and 1844.

Hicks was moderator of the Association in 1831, 1832, and 1836; he was its clerk in 1812, 1813, 1815-1822, 1824-1826—thirteen years in all; he preached the introductory sermon in 1818, 1831, and 1834; and wrote the circular letter in 1820, 1825, 1830, 1834, and 1836, all of which were able productions and several of which have been republished.

This list of the services of the two indicate how closely Dobbins and Hicks were associated in the sessions of the Association, and the important part they had in it. In their general work as ministers they were even more closely associated. They spent the more important years of their lives as neighbors in the Sandy Run neighborhood; Dobbins was pastor of the Sandy Run Church from 1803 until his death in 1847; Hicks came to the section in 1809, the

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<sup>23</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 574.

year after his ordination, when he settled on Sandy Run Creek, seemingly on a plantation that came through his wife, nee Miss Elizabeth Durham, whom he had married on October 10, 1799, "where," says Logan,<sup>24</sup> "they continued to reside many years, during which they reared a large and interesting family." In early life Dobbins married Mrs. Hannah Sams (nee Calahan), who survived him. They had one daughter, who married Richard Harrill, from whom, says Logan<sup>25</sup> "has descended a numerous progeny of respectable standing in the community where they live." Hicks and Dobbins both were farmers, and Dobbins

... like the immortal Dr. Carey, was a shoe-maker, and understood his business well. Like the Apostle Paul, although not a tent-maker, he worked with his own hands to support himself and family rather than become chargeable to the churches he served. For near forty years he served one church as pastor, from which it is said he never received anything beyond a mere pittance. This circumstance is not mentioned for the purpose of chalking out to other churches any particular course of duty, but merely to show the disinterestedness or careless indifference of the man in reference to what is called filthy lucre being an inducement for him to preach and supply churches. By hard labor at the lap-board and on his farm, coupled with economy and frugality, he was enabled to accumulate a competency of the good things of this life, temporally speaking, to render him and his quite comfortable, and he ever appeared to be therewith content. He had plenty and enjoyed it with friends, and there never was a real object of charity turned away from his hospitable door. The self-denying life that he lived, and the many kindnesses that he dealt out to the poor in the shape of charity, accounts for his great and unbounded popularity among the people he served, while, for more than forty years, he acted as a faithful sentinel on the watch-tower of Zion.<sup>26</sup>

Very early Dobbins and Hicks began to work together in revival meetings and as missionaries and evangelists. In

<sup>24</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 406.

<sup>25</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 360 f.

<sup>26</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Association, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 360.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

1812 they led in the first extensive revival in the Association since the Great Revival ten years earlier. Logan gives this account<sup>27</sup> of this later revival:

The churches during the past year had enjoyed a precious revival, and 219 members were added by baptism, which revival was confined mostly to the churches of Buffalo, Sandy Run and Providence. Elder Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks (who labored together a great deal) held a series of meetings at these churches, aided by other ministers who preached the gospel faithfully to the large congregations that attended, and the result was an extraordinary outpouring of God's Spirit and the ingathering, as above mentioned.

At this time these and another minister had entered on long pastorates of the three churches, Dobbins at Sandy Run, 1803 to 1847, Hicks at Buffalo, 1812 to 1834, while Elder Joshua Richards was beginning his pastorate at Providence, 1812 to 1840. This revival seems to have introduced Hicks and Dobbins to the Association; from this time on they were called to all parts of the Association, and "went everywhere preaching the word."<sup>28</sup>

Elder Berryman Hicks was at that time the eloquent "Apollos" of the Broad River Association. His manner of preaching was generally of an exhortatory character especially in the peroration of his sermons, and he did not often fail to make a good impression on his listeners.<sup>29</sup> He was a great revivalist, and by his persuasive, tender and pathetic manner, he through divine grace accomplished much apparent good in building up a religious interest, which at that time was in a drooping and depressed condition. The names of "Hicks and Dobbins" became household words, so great was their popularity as ministers.<sup>30</sup>

Dobbins' manner was different; his preaching was "doctrinal and expository,"<sup>31</sup> and complementary to the preach-

<sup>27</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 406.

<sup>29</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 29 f.

<sup>30</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 406.

<sup>31</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 30.



ing of Hicks. In the first quarter of the last century there was much religious destitution in the Catawba River area, both in the German settlements and in others, but in their ignorance all were stubborn adherents of their beliefs. They needed both instruction in doctrine and exhortation to repentance, and these needs were supplied by the missionary pair, Dobbins and Hicks.

Logan says: <sup>32</sup>

We are informed that about this time the doctrines of particular election, and the saints final perseverance in grace, on the part of Baptists: while general redemption and possible apostasy on the part of our Methodist friends, were the great themes of religious discussion. Many sermons and essays on these novel points found their way into printed pamphlets and other works.

Probably Dobbins and Hicks got a better hearing because of extraordinary physical and social personalities. Of Dobbins, Logan says: <sup>33</sup>

(He) was about five feet 10 inches in height, of square heavy build, weight about 200 pounds, somewhat inclined to corpulency. In early life his hair was jet black, his eyes equally so, and very penetrating. Never sported a moustache, but went clean shaved, believing that "beard was given to men to be cut off." He had a large projecting forehead. In late life was becoming bald and dignified more than ever; nose of the Roman type; a stentorian voice and good articulation. Seldom ever preached a sermon of more than an hour's length. There was so much dignity about the face of Elder Dobbins as to make it impossible for any one coming into his presence not to discover at once that a great and good man stood before him, and thus feeling, by some incomprehensible power, be restrained from all levity or idle jesting, or frivolous liberties of any kind in his presence. So great was the sparkling fire of his dark eyes that it was most impossible to take a full face view of him, and yet he was effeminate and kind in his nature and manners towards his brethren and many friends.

Of Hicks, Logan says: <sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 361.

<sup>34</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 410.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Elder Hicks was above the ordinary height, very corpulent, and weight probably 250 to 300 pounds; blue, or rather hazel eyes, dark hair, erect form, and, upon the whole, of very fine physique and attractive appearance generally.

Despite the work of these two and other ministers in the Association, the records indicate that progress was slow. In 1807 there were twenty-seven churches in the Association, and during a period of ten years there was no net increase in that number, and a decrease of 142 in the total number of members of the various churches. In his record for the year 1808, Logan says: <sup>35</sup>

It is obvious from reading the Minutes that the Broad River Association for a few years past was experiencing a sad state of declension—from what particular cause we are unable to say. It is hardly supposed that emigration was the cause of all of it. We are rather inclined to think the body had not been properly at work in the cause of the Master. We can discover among the constituency of the body nothing of a practical or religious nature, beyond a doting over questions, which engender little else than strife or vain glory.

However, the frequency with which problems caused by emigration were brought before the Association in those days indicates that it was causing great disturbances in the churches, robbing some of their members, and even bringing several to extinction.<sup>36</sup> As many as six of the

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<sup>35</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> For example, see Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, pp. 20, 24, 25, 26, 36, etc. That emigration was indeed a cause of continuing concern in the several associations in the state is evidenced by the circular letter of 1835 written for the Sandy Creek Association by William Hooper. A portion of this letter relative to the support of ministers has already been quoted in our chapter on Organization of Churches, but there follows here that portion lamenting the effect of emigration on the churches:

"Dear Brethren: In taking a view of the state of our Churches, and of the community among which we live, it seems not unseasonable to select as the subject of our annual Address to you, the universal spirit of covetousness which pervades our land. The vice of covetousness is a very insinuating and insidious one. Our Saviour found it necessary to caution his disciples repeatedly against it. There is no sin which can exist to such a degree in the heart without alarming its possessor, and without bringing on him

churches either became extinct or inactive in these ten years, for though six new churches were added, the total number reported showed no net increase. In the following ten years, however, nineteen new churches had been organized in the Broad River territory, giving the Association in 1827 a membership of 41 churches, or a net increase of 14 over the 1807 membership.<sup>37</sup> About half of the nineteen new churches were in North Carolina, half in South Carolina. Several of the new North Carolina churches were towards the north, some of them beyond the Catawba River, and

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discredit in the Church. An inspired Apostle has told us that 'the love of money is the root of all evil.' Of some of these evils we are compelled to be daily and mournful witnesses, and some of them which have infected the Church in a lamentable degree, and of which therefore we are bound to be more on our guard, it will be our purpose, in this letter, to point out. So deeply has the plague of making money smitten our land, as to have produced a universal spirit of emigration. No man hardly seems satisfied with his home. He hears of golden prospects to the south and west, and he must needs go, like his neighbors, to share the spoil. Now although we admit it is lawful for us to change our residence for the bettering of the condition of our family, yet is there not danger of this base lust of covetousness becoming the ruling passion of the soul? Do not men, even professors of religion, think more of rich crops of cotton, and buying and selling slaves, than they do of cultivating the soil of the heart, and making it bring forth abundantly?

"We fear that many persons, even of our Church, think that the main object of living is to make money, and to be constantly accumulating for their heirs. They seem to think that they never can have enough—that a man's life does consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. They seem not to believe our Saviour's declaration, that a rich man shall with difficulty enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor to care for his command, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. They seem to forget the solemn admonition of the Apostle that 'they that would be rich, fall into divers temptations and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in perdition and destruction.' We have the more reason to deplore this state of things, from its disastrous effect on the prosperity of our Churches. The rage for making money produces universal restlessness and dissatisfaction with home and our present possessions. The consequence is, no man feels himself settled, nor cares to engage in any measures and enterprizes for the improvement of the neighborhood where he now is. He is sighing for the West. The accounts he hears of the fortunes making there, fill his mind by day and even enter into his dreams by night. While in this state of mind, he cannot be expected to care much for the salvation of his own soul or the souls of others. Does this look much like taking heed to the precept, 'We brought nothing into this world and we can carry nothing out. Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content'? Oh brethren, it is sadly to be feared that many are in haste to be rich, sacrifice their own souls, and the souls of their families, to mammon. . . ."

<sup>37</sup> It is convenient to give here a table showing the number of churches

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

ministers of the Association were working in collaboration with the pioneer ministers of the Upper Yadkin Valley who were extending their activities to the south, and also with the ministers of the French Broad.

On its organization in 1800, the Broad River Association had one church, Smyrna, in Burke County, twelve miles north of Morganton and six miles north of the Catawba River. By 1827, New Bethany, east of the river in Iredell County, and North Catawba, a mile north of the river, had become members of the Association. We have seen that in 1815 the church now known as Warlick's, was added to the Association, and in 1816 Mount Ruhama was admitted, both only a short distance south of the river. In 1824, the Association met at Head of First Broad River Church, the most northerly church in Rutherford County as it was then constituted. That communications between the churches and ministers of the Broad River Association and those of

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in the Broad River Association and their total memberships for the years 1801-1851.

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Number of Churches</i> | <i>Of Members</i> | <i>Increase</i> | <i>Decrease</i> |
|-------------|---------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1801        | 19                        | 959               |                 |                 |
| 1802        | 20                        | 1,480             | 521             |                 |
| 1803        | 27                        | 2,084             | 604             |                 |
| 1804        | 29                        | 2,000             |                 | 84              |
| 1805        | 29                        | 1,794             |                 | 206             |
| 1806        | 30                        | 1,666             |                 | 128             |
| 1807        | 27                        | 1,645             |                 | 21              |
| 1808        | 27                        | 1,311             |                 | 334             |
| 1809        | 27                        | 1,275             |                 | 36              |
| 1810        | 29                        | 1,259             |                 | 16              |
| 1811        | 26                        | 1,182             |                 | 77              |
| 1812        | 25                        | 1,272             | 90              |                 |
| 1813        | 25                        | 1,624             | 352             |                 |
| 1814        | No statistics             |                   |                 |                 |
| 1815        | 26                        | 1,519             |                 | 105             |
| 1816        | 28                        | 1,503             |                 | 16              |
| 1817        | 27                        | 1,442             |                 | 61              |
| 1818        | 28                        | 1,563             | 121             |                 |
| 1819        | 30                        | 1,716             | 153             |                 |
| 1820        | 35                        | 2,165             | 449             |                 |
| 1821        | 37                        | 2,211             | 46              |                 |
| 1822        | 38                        | 2,139             |                 | 72              |
| 1823        | 37                        | 2,093             |                 | 46              |
| 1824        | 38                        | 2,236             | 143             |                 |



## BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

the Upper Yadkin Valley region had already been established is indicated by the fact that in 1825 the Mountain Association sent as its messenger to the Broad River Elder Reuben Coffee,<sup>38</sup> at that time a member of the Head of the Yadkin Church. As a result of such communications and the development of interest both south and north of the Catawba River, there arose a sense of the need of a new association in which the churches of both sections could unite. Accordingly, for the formation of such an association, the Broad River Association at its session of 1827 dismissed eight of its churches—Ebenezer, Bill's Creek, Head of the First Broad River, Mountain Creek, Big Spring, all in Rutherford County; Mt. Ruhama, in Lincoln (now Catawba) County; Silver Creek in Burke County; and New Bethany in Iredell County; and in 1828 two others, Smyrna

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|      |    |         |       |       |
|------|----|---------|-------|-------|
| 1825 | 39 | 2,248   | 12    |       |
| 1826 | 41 | 2,090   |       | 158   |
| 1827 | 41 | 1,908   |       | 172   |
| 1828 | 33 | 1,588   |       | 320   |
| 1829 | 31 | 1,653   | 65    |       |
| 1830 | 31 | 1,634 ✓ |       | 19    |
| 1831 | 32 | 1,537   |       | 97    |
| 1832 | 32 | 2,111   | 574   |       |
| 1833 | 31 | 2,503   | 392   |       |
| 1834 | 26 | 1,748   |       | 755   |
| 1835 | 26 | 1,751   | 3     |       |
| 1836 | 26 | 1,749   |       | 2     |
| 1837 | 26 | 1,652   |       | 97    |
| 1838 | 27 | 1,650   |       | 2     |
| 1839 | 27 | 1,725   | 75    |       |
| 1840 | 28 | 2,165 ✓ | 440   |       |
| 1841 | 28 | 2,197   | 32    |       |
| 1842 | 28 | 1,993   |       | 204   |
| 1843 | 28 | 2,032   | 39    |       |
| 1844 | 28 | 2,129   | 97    |       |
| 1845 | 29 | 2,057   |       | 72    |
| 1846 | 30 | 2,074   | 17    |       |
| 1847 | 33 | 3,002   | 928   |       |
| 1848 | 36 | 1,630   |       | 1,372 |
| 1849 | 38 | 2,835   | 1,205 |       |
| 1850 | 39 | 2,945   | 110   |       |
| 1851 | 41 | 3,812   | 867   |       |
| 1852 | 27 | 2,379   |       | 1,433 |

<sup>38</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 42.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

and North Catawba in Burke County. Five other churches, namely, Union, Head of the Yadkin, King's Creek, Globe and Lower Creek, all, or nearly all of which were situated in that portion of Burke County which was in 1841 set off as Caldwell, joined on November 16, 1827, with the eight dismissed by the Broad River Association in 1827 in the organization of the Catawba River Association, which was joined by Smyrna and North Catawba shortly thereafter.<sup>39</sup>

Although there is some evidence to the contrary, the records of the Catawba River Association, as Major Graham claims,<sup>40</sup> bear out the fact that it should not be classed as anti-missionary, and also reveal that it was progressive in its support of education. By 1835, the number of churches had more than doubled; from that time forward there were additions, but also occasional dismissals of churches to join other associations, so that the total number of churches for a great many years remained about constant. As will be seen, in 1841 eight of its churches joined in the organization of the Green River Association. There were also occasional dissolutions of churches which had become too weak to continue their existence. The Association, realizing that the lack of ministers was, in part, a cause, early began to support an associational missionary and urge the individual churches to support properly both their own pastors and the associational missionaries.

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<sup>39</sup> Seemingly Major Graham, in his *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, is in error in indicating at page 43 that the five churches named above were from the Yadkin Association. More likely they had belonged to the Mountain Association which was organized in 1798 from churches lying south and west of the Yadkin Association, with which the Broad River Association seems never to have been in correspondence. On the other hand, the Mountain was in correspondence with the Broad River as early as 1825. (Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 42.) Like the Broad River, the Catawba River Association did not until 1834 correspond with the Yadkin, but the Mountain Association was among the first with which it opened correspondence in 1829, its messenger for that year being Drury Senter. See Poe, *Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Association*, pp. 1, 2, 3.

<sup>40</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 82.

## BROAD RIVER 1807-1827

The year 1860 was a critical time in the Association's development. Then, "owing to the small number of Delegates present, and to other unpropitious circumstances, the brethren were very much discouraged . . . and were almost upon the point of dissolving the body entirely."<sup>41</sup> But the crisis was weathered, and from that time forward the Association has more or less prospered. By 1877

The bounds of the Catawba River Association, from Union II (Sandy Plains) to Smyrna, or Rocky Springs, was about 100 miles, embracing most of Gaston, Lincoln, Catawba, Caldwell and Burke counties. When the meeting was in the "upper or lower sections," it required from a week to ten days for brethren in either of these localities to go to and from and attend the Associations. As nearly all the Baptists were people who labored with their own hands, this was a considerable loss of time. Consideration convinced them that nothing was being accomplished which could not be in Associations of smaller bounds. The reduction of area in Associations had generally been accompanied by achievement of greater results in the Master's work. Many of the churches in the upper portion seemed to be badly tinctured with anti-mission sentiments. It is, also, a sad fact that most churches became indolent as they grew older. In the lower sections, most of the churches were of more recent organization and had the zeal usual with a new convert. They deserved a separation, in a great measure, on these accounts.<sup>42</sup>

Consequently, it was voted in 1878 that the Association should divide, the older, less missionary-minded churches in the western portion retaining the name of the parent organization, and the more vigorous, newer churches to the east joining in the formation of a new association, the South Fork.

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<sup>41</sup> Poe, *Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Association*, p. 12.

<sup>42</sup> Graham, *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 83.

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## XXV

### BROAD RIVER 1828-1851

In 1828, the year following the organization of the Catawba River Association, there remained in the Broad River Association 33 churches with 1,588 members. The next year two other churches had been dismissed, but a revival reported in 1829 resulting in the baptism of 102 had brought the number of members to 1,653. Serious losses followed, and though no loss of churches was reported, in 1831 the number of members had fallen to 1,537, the lowest number since 1818. During the next year, 1831-1832, the churches reported 574 baptisms, "the fruit," says Logan,<sup>1</sup> "of a glorious revival of religion among the churches." As the revival continued, 314 new members were added by baptism in 1832-1833, bringing the total membership of the thirty-one churches to 2,503, a larger number than ever before.

At the session of the Association of 1833, meeting at Long Creek Church in Gaston County, five churches—Mount Zion, Holly Springs, Bethlehem, Washington and Head of Tyger River—were dismissed and later joined in the formation of the Tyger River Association. All these churches were in Greenville and Spartanburg counties of South Carolina. Two noted ministers, John G. Landrum and John W. Lewis, led the movement for the new associa-

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<sup>1</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 48.



tion.<sup>2</sup> The development of the new body was considerable in the years before the Civil War, "bordering on the gigantic,"<sup>3</sup> and was altogether in South Carolina.

In 1834, the year following the dismissal of the five South Carolina churches, the Broad River Association had twenty-six churches with 1,748 members. Thereafter for several years progress was slow. It was 1838 before another church was added, while a small decline in membership was reported year by year, the number reported in 1838 being 1,650. In 1840 another church was added, Zion Hill, three miles east of Spartanburg, one of its organizers being the great evangelistic preacher mentioned above, Elder John G. Landrum. The great revival in the Tyger River Association, in which Landrum had the chief part, had spread to the churches of the Broad River, and Goucher Creek, Buck Creek, Green River, New Prospect, Providence, Bethesda, Camps Creek, Macedonia, Zoar, Cedar Springs and other churches "enjoyed revival seasons and were greatly refreshed."<sup>4</sup> During the year 487 were added by baptism and the total number of members became 2,165. The re-

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<sup>2</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 50f., says: "This body (the Tyger River Association) was formed soon afterwards. Elders John G. Landrum and John W. Lewis were both delegated from Mount Zion Church, and were in the session of the Broad River (at Long's Creek), Dr. Lewis acting clerk of the body. We very well recollect the youthful and slender appearance of Landrum, while exhibiting the Gospel in his earnest and pathetic way to the large congregations which attended that session of the Association. He was a great revivalist, and spoke cheering words of a good work of grace then going on in the region of country he represented, embracing portions of Spartanburg and Greenville counties, in South Carolina, which seemed to pervade the country where he and Dr. Lewis had been laboring. Lewis was a man of considerable bulk, a little over the medium size, heavy build, with large chest, and stentorian voice, and a good preacher—although not as acceptable as Landrum."

<sup>3</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 455, in a sketch of Elder John G. Landrum by H. P. Griffith, which first was published in the *Baptist Courier*, and which is of much value for the history of the Baptists in the section where Landrum served.

<sup>4</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 61.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

vival continued, resulting in 152 baptisms in 1841 and the number of members rose to 2,197.

With this increase in numbers and evangelistic zeal the desire and need for a new association began to be felt. This seems to have been strongest among those churches in the region lying just to the north of the territory of Tyger River Association, in Greenville and Spartanburg counties, where the Baptists were making such great progress. In 1841 five churches situated in the present counties of Polk and Rutherford, North Carolina, obtained from the Broad River Association letters of dismissal that they might join in the formation of the new association. These were Green River, Greens Creek, High Shoals, Concord, and Shiloh. These were joined by eight of the more southerly churches of the Catawba River Association—Bill's Creek, Bethel, Mountain Creek, Round Hill, Montsford's Cove, Ebenezer, Big Springs, and Head of First Broad River—which in the same year obtained letters of dismissal for the purpose. At the organization of the new association, the Green River, its churches were for the most part in Rutherford County including that part which was cut off as Polk in 1855. In 1890 the Green River Association was divided into two associations by a line running generally east and west, the southern portion being the Sandy Run Association in the formation of which churches dismissed from the King's Mountain Association joined. In 1929, the Green River again split, the churches in McDowell County withdrawing to form the Blue Ridge Association. In 1950, the Green River Association reported 37 churches, 267 baptisms, 8,095 members and 6,128 in Sunday school, while the Sandy Run reported 56 churches, 526 baptisms, 16,545 members, 12,507 in Sunday school. The Blue Ridge reported 37 churches, 270 baptisms, 6,740 members and 5,817 in Sunday school.

In 1842, the year following the dismissal of the five

churches to the Green River Association, the number of churches in the Broad River was again reported at twenty-eight, since at that session four new churches were added to the Broad River, Corinth and Sulphur Springs in South Carolina, and Capernaum and Bethlehem in North Carolina, as was Unity, a church formerly belonging to Bethel Association. At the session of 1851 the churches numbered 41, the members 3,812. The records show healthy progress during these years, with about 140 baptisms in normal years. In 1848, the number was 291, and two years later 226, due in part at least to the great revival in the churches at Boiling Springs (N. C.), New Bethel, Double Springs, Zion, Zoar, Providence, Sandy Run, Buffalo and Bethlehem, all later members of the King's Mountain Association. Part of the increase, however, was due to the admission of churches. In addition to the five admitted in 1842, the Association added Upper Fair Forest and Pacolet, both in South Carolina, in 1844; Double Springs, in North Carolina, in 1845; Gilead (South Carolina) in 1846; Shelby and Ephesus, in North Carolina in 1847; Mount Sinai, Boiling Springs and Bethel, all in North Carolina, in 1848; Mount Pleasant and Salem, in North Carolina, in 1849; Broad River, in South Carolina, in 1850; and Beaver Dam and Pleasant Hill, in North Carolina, in 1851.

These newly admitted churches were all in the same general district, thirteen of the nineteen in North Carolina. Out of this situation came the organization of the King's Mountain Association in 1851. For several years prior to his death in 1847, Elder Drury Dobbins of the Sandy Run Church, Cleveland County, N. C., had been agitating the question of dividing the Association by the formation of a new body, and at the meeting of the Association in 1851 at Sandy Run Church letters of dismission for this purpose were granted to twelve churches: Sandy Run, Zoar, Double Springs, Bethel, Boiling Springs, Mount Sinai, New

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Bethel, Mount Pleasant, Beaver Dam, Pleasant Hill, Bufalo, and Broad River, all except the last two in North Carolina, and they not far from the State line. This action was not taken without manifestation of unwillingness as it was the virtual dissolution of a union that had made the Broad River one of the strongest associations in the Carolinas. There was also some show of ill-will which almost ended in a wrangle, but this soon subsided, and all wished the new association Godspeed.

In the earlier years the only disadvantage encountered by the Broad River Association by having in it churches of two states seemed to be the wide extent of its territory, making it difficult for the churches to keep in easy communication with one another, either in associations or other meetings, but later, when the Baptists of each of the Carolinas formed state-wide organizations and State Conventions of their own, separate from like organizations in the other state, other difficulties appeared which made it impractical for the Broad River Association to join in the co-operative organized work of the Baptists in either of the Carolinas. This first became obvious after the organization of the General Meeting of Correspondence of North Carolina. This General Meeting, proposed first by Elder Martin Ross to the Chowan Association in 1809, was after the model of a recently-formed Virginia body. All the ten Baptist associations of North Carolina, the Broad River among them, were invited to become members of it. In the records of the Broad River Association the first and only reference to it is in the Minutes of the meeting of 1813, at Smyrna Church, Burke County, when the Association appointed as messengers two pastors of North Carolina churches, Elder Ambrose Carlton of Smyrna, and Elder Drury Dobbins of Sandy Run. The Minutes of the General Meeting show that both of these men were present at the next annual session on July 21, 1814, at Wake Union Church, one mile



northwest of the site of Wake Forest College, and that the Broad River was then and afterwards for several years listed as a member association, though it sent no messengers after 1814.

In the Minutes of the Association, except as noted above, there is no reference to the General Meeting of Correspondence, and Logan, the historian for the Broad River Association, writing in 1882, has only conjectures about its nature.<sup>5</sup> It is obvious, however, that the General Meeting was of interest only to North Carolina Baptist churches, and not to the churches in South Carolina. Doubtless for a like consideration the Association did not accept the invitation to join the South Carolina Baptist Convention after its organization in 1821, but having considered the matter for a year or two "by a vote of the body refused to do so."<sup>6</sup> After this there is no record in the Minutes of the Broad River Association to any communication with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Though not mentioned in the Minutes, Rev. Samuel Wait, as agent of the Convention, visited the Association at its session at Long Creek, Gaston County, in 1833, of which visit Logan gives an account.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter the agents of the Convention did not

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<sup>5</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 41.

<sup>7</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 51: "The venerable Dr. Samuel Wait attended this session of the Association—a man who did more, it is said, for the development of the educational interests of North Carolina than any other man living at any time in the State. Whether this be true or not, it is certain that his influence upon the Baptists was very great, and he was the man to whom more than any other the denomination is indebted for the Baptist State Convention, being the first and most efficient agent of that body; and as the founder of Wake Forest College he has laid our people under the most sacred obligations to cherish his memory with grateful affection. Dr. Wait was born in Washington County, New York, Dec. 19th, 1780, says the Baptist Encyclopedia, and was consequently 53 years of age at this session of the Association, but looked as though he was more than three-score and ten. It is strange there is no mention of Dr. Wait in the Minutes of the session. So strange was the state of feeling existing at that time between the North and South on the slavery question,

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visit the Broad River on their western tours, and so far as the records show, neither the Association nor any of its churches made any contribution for the support of the objects of the Convention. And this condition continued until the organization of the King's Mountain Association in 1851 virtually ended the union of churches of the two states in the Association. However, at the meeting of the Convention at Rockford, Surry County, October 1848, "a communication was presented from Dr. Thomas Curtis of the Limestone Springs Female Institute in relation to aiding the Broad River Society in Aid of the Spread of the Gospel in employing a missionary."<sup>8</sup> This society had been organized in 1847, after the Association at its meetings in 1845 and 1846 had voted to leave the support of "domestic missions" to its individual churches. Its chief promoters were Dr. Thomas Curtis and his son, Dr. William Curtis, and Elder Wade Hill, and the organization was at Limestone Springs; Dr. Thomas Curtis was its Corresponding Secretary. The result of the application of this society for aid, as shown in the Report of the Board of Managers of the North Carolina Convention in October, 1849, was that, "The Board agreed to appropriate one hundred dollars to aid them in employing Elder Wade Hill as a mis-

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that even christian courtesies were withheld. It is possible that angels may sometimes be entertained unawares. We know of our own personal knowledge that Dr. Wait attended this meeting of the Association, and preached several good sermons under the requests of the people, sent up to the body through the committee on religious exercises." Possibly Logan is in error in attributing the omission of notice of Wait's visit to sectional prejudice. Even though the clerk at this time, Dr. John W. Lewis, to whom the omission was due, was afterwards an ardent Southerner and prominent in political affairs, it may be that his reason for making no reference to Wait was that Wait was agent for a convention in which the Association as a whole had no interest. With reference to this visit, Dr. Wait says in his report as agent of the Convention in the Annual Report of 1833, at page 15: "While in the upper part of the State, I attended the annual meetings of the French Broad, the Catawba and the Broad River Associations. Each of these bodies gave me a very friendly reception, and cheerfully indulged me with an opportunity of explaining the objects of the Convention. Two of these Associations I had never seen before. One of them, the Catawba, I had the pleasure of attending two years ago."

<sup>8</sup> *Minutes of the Baptist State Convention, 1848, p. 6.*

sionary in the valley of the Catawba and surrounding country, a section of the State almost entirely destitute of Baptist preaching, and where, the Board learn great anxiety is manifested for the services of a missionary. Elder Hill has entered successfully upon the discharge of his duties, for the particulars of which the Convention is referred to his report."

During this period, 1827-1851, in addition to the ministers already mentioned, many others labored in the Broad River Association, some learned, but the greater number, as told by Logan in his *Biographical Sketches*,<sup>9</sup> handicapped by lack of early schooling. Nearly all, however, were worthy ministers of Jesus Christ, faithful and devoted, and had a part in that great Baptist development in the Broad River region of both the Carolinas. The stories of their lives and labors, as told by the biographer, and resulting in the great development of Baptist churches found today in the valleys of the Broad and Catawba rivers is highly inspirational, but for the greater number of these we must refer to Logan's work. Here we take brief account of only a few of those who became more prominent.

One of these was Elder James Milton Webb. He was born in the Green River section of Rutherford County on October 7, 1802. In his early life he devoted his attention to political affairs, and was chosen several times to represent his county in the State Legislature, and later served as Clerk of the Superior Court of his county for sixteen years. As a debater he had few equals. In 1834 he made a profession of religion and joined the High Shoals Church and thereafter devoted his life to religious work, and with such zeal and ability as to make him one of the most trusted leaders in the counsels of the Baptists of his section. In 1835 he first appeared at a session of the Association; he

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<sup>9</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, pp. 249-556.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

preached the introductory sermon in 1837 and was elected clerk the same year, a position in which he continued to serve until 1841 when his church became a constituent member of the Green River Association. While still a member of the Broad River, he was called upon twice to write the circular letter, each of which is highly praised. When the Green River Association was organized in 1841, he was at once called to preside over its deliberations and continued a prominent and leading factor in the business operations of that body as long as he lived. His influence extended to the neighboring associations. He died April 24, 1854, in his fifty-second year. Among his sons were Elder G. M. Webb, long a prominent minister of the King's Mountain Association, who was the father of E. Yates Webb, who first as a Congressman, and later as Federal judge has done long and distinguished service. For many years he was a member of the Board of Trustees of Wake Forest College.

Two of the ablest ministers of the Association in this period were Elder Thomas Curtis, D.D., and Elder William Curtis, LL.D. They were father and son, both natives of England, the father having been born at Wisbach, Cambridgeshire, May 10, 1787, the son in Cumbuwel, April 23, 1817. The father was the son of a substantial yeoman, and in boyhood showed such intellectual vigor that he was sent to one of the best of the English schools. As he was finishing in this school he won the prize in an essay contest which entitled him to admission to the University of Cambridge, which he did not accept, since, being a member of a Baptist church, he could not conscientiously sign the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. "He devoted himself to study, labor, and usefulness for the church of God,"<sup>10</sup> and became the minister of the church to which he belonged and later of a church in London.

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<sup>10</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 304.



## BROAD RIVER 1828-1851

There his literary attainments brought him into intimate relations with men of eminence, one of them Samuel Taylor Coleridge, with whom he labored in the production of the first parts of the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*.

After further distinguished services in England, he came in 1834 with his family to America, and for some years served churches in Maine, during which time Bowdoin College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Finding the Maine climate too rigorous for some members of his family, following the advice of Rev. Holmes Tupper, then of Savannah, he moved to Georgia and served churches at Macon and Penfield. In 1841 he was called to the pastorate of Wentworth Street Church of Charleston. In 1845 he and his son, Dr. William Curtis, came into possession of the Limestone Springs property, now Gaffney, and taking up their residence there, joined in the formation of the church first called Ephesus, later Limestone, and established the Limestone Female High School, later known as Cooper-Limestone, and today as Limestone College, an institution which from the day of its establishment has been of inestimable service in the education of girls and young women of both the Carolinas. After more than a hundred years it continues its great work. Both Dr. Thomas Curtis and his son took a leading part in religious work; the father was an active evangelist whose labors were most fruitful; it was as a result of his work that the First Baptist Church in Yorkville was constituted; the son for fifteen years was pastor of the Limestone church. Both were active in the work of the Association. In 1847, serving with others as delegates of the new Ephesus (Limestone) Church, they secured its admission to the Broad River Association, and thereafter so long as they lived they were asked to serve as moderator or clerk, and were among the leaders in their advocacy of Sunday schools and missions. In 1849 and in 1850 Dr. Thomas Curtis wrote the annual circular

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letter, that of 1849 on Baptism, that of 1850 on the Communion, the two constituting an able and scholarly exposition of Baptist views of the ordinances, which, says Logan,<sup>11</sup> "united together make a neat little book, which should be kept for future reference." Thereafter either the father or the son most often wrote the annual circular letter, and always wrote ably and well. However, probably their greatest work in connection with the Association was in bringing its churches and their members from an anti-mission or indifferent attitude to unite in zealous support of missions, and particularly missions to those sections in the Broad River and Catawba River valleys destitute of Baptist preaching. They began this work even before their church had been formally admitted to the Association; at the session of 1846, Dr. Thomas Curtis gave his powerful support to the circular letter on Domestic Missions by Elder Wade Hill, but even though he was joined in his advocacy of the letter by Elder James M. Webb, the Association under the influence of the much loved and trusted Elder Drury Dobbins adopted the letter only after making emasculating deletions. Defeated in this, they found another way to foster support of missions by the Broad River Baptists, and in 1847 organized at Limestone the "Broad River Society in Aid of the Spread of the Gospel," which operated so effectively that after a few years the Association was entrusting to it the money it raised for missionary purposes, and which in 1856, at the request of the Association, merged with it into one missionary association.<sup>12</sup>

Elder Thomas Curtis perished in the burning of the steamer *Raleigh*, bound from Baltimore to Norfolk, January

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<sup>11</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 77.

<sup>12</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 85.

## BROAD RIVER 1828-1851

29, 1859; Elder William Curtis, after several years of illness, died on October 30, 1873.

Another able minister of this period was Elder Wade Hill. He was a native of Rutherford County, Green River section, born July 21, 1813, married Miss Emma Ledbetter in August 1834, and was baptized in April 1837; he was preaching his first sermon in "just one month,"<sup>13</sup> but was not ordained until April, 1839. Lacking early education, he educated himself, and became one of the ablest preachers in the churches of the section west of the Catawba, and held pastorates in three associations. He did much work as a missionary for the Broad River Association, and wrote the circular letter on "Domestic Missions" which brought the great discussion at the session of 1846. He joined in the formation of the Broad River Society in Aid of the Spread of the Gospel in 1847, and was its sole missionary during the years of its operation, 1847-1853, after which he continued as a missionary of the Broad River Association. He died December 1, 1878. Something of the life and labors of this well-beloved man may be learned from the extracts given in the footnote from Logan's sketch of him.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 418f.

<sup>14</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 418f. "His parents were unable to give him the advantages of an early education, so that the high character he acquired as a preacher was due, under God, to his deep piety, sound sense, and unceasing effort to educate himself in the work to which he was called. . . . As a preacher he had few equals. He was always sound in doctrine, and his sermons were especially noticeable for their deep solemnity, and the earnestness with which they were delivered. . . . There are hundreds of men and women throughout this country who can remember the greater part of many of his sermons; so impressive was his style. . . . He always thought before speaking, and always drew his conclusions upon the authority of God's Word, and he would always speak the truth in soberness, and never feared to declare the whole counsel of God. He accomplished a great work in the Broad River, King's Mountain and Green River Associations, and had been a member of all these bodies, but was a member of the Green River at the time of his death. . . . He was a strong arm for young ministers to lean upon, and a fountain of counsel to the churches and other religious bodies. . . . He was zealous in the mis-

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At the time of the formation of the King's Mountain Association several who afterwards became distinguished ministers were ordained ministers or licentiates in the Broad River Association. Among these were Elders Thomas Dixon and Joseph Suttle, both serving churches in Cleveland County, the former Zion, the latter Double Springs. The licentiates were B. E. Rollins and G. W. Rollins, both natives of Cleveland County, who were ordained soon afterwards and for many years did great service in the King's Mountain Association. The descendants of nearly all of these continued the work they began. Only Dixon was not a native of North Carolina. He was born in York County, South Carolina, December 24, 1820, was baptized in 1838, ordained in 1844, and first appeared at the Broad River Association in 1850. The next year, as delegate of Zion Church, he attended the meeting of the Broad River Association at Sandy Run Church and preached the introductory sermon; in the same year, November 7, as a representative of the same church, he helped in the formation of the King's Mountain Association at Double Springs Church and was elected its first moderator. Until his death he was one of the leading ministers of the King's Mountain Association. Though his own educational advantages were limited, he provided his three sons and two daughters with the best education available, with the result that all did great work in church or state. The oldest, Rev. A. C. Dixon, became one of the world's great preachers who proclaimed an evangelistic gospel as pastor of churches in Baltimore, Brooklyn, Boston, and Chicago, where he was successor of Moody at the great Moody church, and in London, where he succeeded Spurgeon as pastor at the Tabernacle.

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sionary cause, and having labored a good deal as an Evangelist himself, he saw more and more the wants of the people in regard to the spread of the Gospel. He urged the cause of missions upon the attention of the churches and of the Association, and set a good example himself by liberally contributing to the work both of home and foreign missions."



## BROAD RIVER 1828-1851

Like other Baptist associations in all parts of the country in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Broad River was much troubled with impostors, that is, adventurers claiming to be Baptist preachers, who, coming as strangers to the widely scattered churches of the early days, by one pretense or another got into the pulpits of the churches and into the homes of the members. Their real character may be judged from the terms used by Logan and other Baptist historians of the day to designate them—"ministers of Satan," "vile impostors," "wolves in sheep's clothing," "very fit representatives of their old father, the Devil," etc.<sup>15</sup> With reference to seven such impostors advertized in the minutes of the 1813 session of the Broad River Association, Logan says:<sup>16</sup>

Here we find a list of seven vile impostors in the character of ministers of the Gospel of Christ—false teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing who, by deceitful words, were endeavoring to ingratiate themselves into the favor and good graces of the unsuspecting and simple-minded people where they operated, for the nefarious purposes of gratifying their devilish ambition and wicked lusts, under the hallowed cloak of religion.

In the half century before the organization of the King's Mountain Association in 1851, the Broad River advertized by name twenty-seven of these impostors, and warned the churches to beware of them. Usually only one or two a year were advertized, but in 1813 the number was seven, in 1835 four, and in 1845 eight. Not all those advertized were operating among the churches of the Broad River Association, but many were included who had been previously advertized in the minutes of other associations, such as the Hudson River, the New Jersey, the Sandy Creek and the Tyger River. For several years the Association had a

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<sup>15</sup> These appellations are from Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, pp. 11, 31, and 45.

<sup>16</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 31.

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committee whose duty it was to check the minutes of other associations and report the names of unworthy ministers advertized in them, believing that such would be seeking new fields of operation.

Again, it is necessary to say that the term "vile impostors" included many against whose moral character nothing was known, but who taught false doctrines, Arminianism, universalism, open communion, etc. In some instances they had been pastors of churches for several years before their false teaching was discovered. They were regarded as dangerous to the peace and harmony and efficiency of the churches. Usually no harsher term than "disorderly" was applied to them, but no church any longer desired their services. The term "impostor" was also used to designate any minister of the Association who had become morally corrupt. Four preachers advertized in the minutes of the Association for 1828 were from the Sandy Creek Association—Mark Andrews, Randolph Mabry, Leonard Prather and Elisha Revels. As early as 1808 the Sandy Creek Association had found the church of which Andrews was pastor not "orthodox in principle or consistent with the word of God in practice,"<sup>17</sup> and promptly excluded it from its membership. Though after two years it was re-admitted, this church, Haw River Mountain, continued to be troublesome, and in a few years it was found that one of the oldest ministers of the Association and two others under his influence were in disorder. To prevent the further spread of the trouble the Sandy Creek excommunicated all four and at its session in 1825 ordered "that they be published for three weeks in the *Raleigh Star*, and in *Western Carolinian*." In 1828 the Broad River Association also published the same four in its minutes.

Such publication was doubtless preceded in each instance

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<sup>17</sup> Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association*, p. 81.

by discussion in the meetings of the Association of the nature and significance of the false doctrines taught by the disorderly ministers. In this way the members of the churches were instructed in the doctrines of the faith as held by Baptists and were made intolerant of preachers of any departure from those doctrines. As a consequence, the threat of false teaching caused by the presence of these impostors served to keep the Baptists of all sections where the threat existed united in a common faith and uncompromising defenders of it. They had no overlords or bishops to appoint proper ministers for their churches and silence any who taught subversive doctrines; they had no widely circulated denominational papers or other periodicals in which doctrines were discussed; they had no books of common prayer, no creed oft repeated in worship, no book of discipline, no authoritative catechism, but they had their associations in the meetings of which year by year they heard their ablest ministers discuss doctrines and warn them to beware of the false teachers advertized in their annual minutes. Thus, to the wonder of many, the Baptists of those early days remained united in their loyalty to the faith once delivered to the saints.

The above statement refers chiefly to false teachers in the Baptist churches in the Broad River section. In eastern North Carolina, such teachers, some of them very able and aggressive, as early as 1835, preaching a plausible but false approximation of Baptist doctrines, were threatening the loyalty of the churches to the faith. However, the Baptists met their challenge boldly, promptly, and successfully. This they were able to do because they had come under the instructions of such able Baptist ministers as Lemuel Burkitt and Martin Ross. In 1830 they had organized the Baptist State Convention and in 1835 already had a college and a Baptist paper and had such leaders as Thomas Meredith, John Armstrong and Samuel Wait, all men who had

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

the training of the schools. It was under such leadership that nearly all the Baptist churches of Eastern North Carolina escaped the virtual ruin of their truly evangelistic New Testament faith, a ruin that befell so many Baptist populations in Virginia and Kentucky and states further west. The following from the Minutes of the Chowan Association of 1834 indicates how early their leaders recognized the danger and the effective means they used to avert it.

On motion, Resolved, unanimously, that this association cordially approve the course persued by our esteemed bro. T. Meredith and others, in resisting the encroachments and innovations of the Campbellite Reformers; Resolved further that the above resolution be presented for publication in the *N. C. Baptist Interpreter*.

Believing that much injury has resulted to the churches because of their admitting into their pulpits persons professing to be ministers, without requiring of them proper certificates,

*Therefore, Resolved*, That this association recommend to the churches not to admit into their pulpits any stranger who does not come properly recommended.

From 1851, the development and history of the Broad River Association is of interest primarily to South Carolina Baptists. Something further should be said, however, about the progress of its offspring, the King's Mountain Association, in its early years.

The King's Mountain Association was formed at the time when temperance was a burning and divisive issue among Baptists in western North Carolina. We have seen that the Taylorsville Association was organized because of it. The King's Mountain Association did not escape trouble on its account; a temperance resolution was introduced and rejected at its third session, that of 1853, it being deemed inexpedient under the circumstances then existing. By 1859, however, the temperance committee reported:<sup>18</sup>

We, the committee to report on Temperance to the King's Mountain Association, beg leave to say that we are of the opinion that

<sup>18</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Association, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 177.



## BROAD RIVER 1828-1851

the church is the place to give the most effective check to the evils of intemperance, and we are of the opinion that it will be right and proper, and not inconsistent with any of our privileges or liberties, nor with the Word of God, for this Association to hereafter refuse to receive any church into the union of this body without said church have incorporated into its rules one forbidding its members to make, buy, sell, or use as a common beverage intoxicating liquors.

The Association adopted the report and went further, resolving not to hold fellowship with any church already a member which retained among its number persons who bought, sold, made, or used intoxicating spirits. The resolution not only proved unenforceable, but also resulted in a schism of the Association in 1860 that was not healed until 1866, at which time, in an effort at conciliation, the body voted that the resolution as passed in 1859 was unconstitutional and the two branches of the Association reunited. The Association has enjoyed a fruitful existence since that time, its work and interest in missions, education, Sunday schools and other Christian work closely paralleling that of other progressive associations of the State. In 1952, it reported 62 churches, 20,645 members, and 764 baptisms.

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## XXVI

### THE FRENCH BROAD ASSOCIATION

At the 1807 session of the Broad River Association at Green's Creek Church, it dismissed its three churches west of the Blue Ridge—French Broad, Cane Creek and Caney River, to join in the formation of a new association with three churches of the Holston Association, which were Little Ivy, New Found and Locust Old Fields. This new association was the French Broad, until 1828 the only Baptist association west of the Blue Ridge in this section, which, according to Rev. John Ammons in his *Outlines of History of French Broad Association*,<sup>1</sup> “embraces thirteen counties, lying almost altogether, west of the Blue Ridge, and having their towns located in the valleys lying between the Blue Ridge and the Alleghanies.” In 1807 this territory was contained within two counties, Buncombe and Burke; all that portion lying west and south of Toe River belonged to Buncombe, and it was somewhere in Buncombe that the first settlement was made. Ammons continues:

With the first settlers came the preacher of the gospel; the pioneers in religious work were the Baptists and the Methodists—the Baptists taking the lead. Settlements were made in what is now Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Yancey, Mitchell and Haywood counties. The first settlements were located in the valleys and on the principal water-courses, and in each of these settlements a church was soon established. It is not definitely known what church was first organized, but this belongs to Little Ivy, now in Madison County, or to French Broad, in Henderson County.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 5.

As is evident, Rev. John Ammons has little definite information about the early history of this section. Likewise, Rev. A. I. Justice, who wrote the valuable *Historical Sketches of the Carolina Baptist Association* published in the 1924 Minutes of the Carolina Association, is also lacking in information of early history west of the Blue Ridge.<sup>2</sup> Like Ammons, Justice writes of development of the Baptists in this section in the years following the organization of the French Broad Association, and professes ignorance of their previous activities, saying:<sup>3</sup>

It is not definitely known who was the first Baptist preacher to proclaim the Gospel west of the Blue Ridge.

Neither of these zealous and able Baptist writers seems to have known what Baptist preachers first labored here, where they came from, under what auspices they came, and what kind of gospel they preached. In what follows some answer will be given to these questions.

First of all, it is known that much of the early Baptist development west of the Blue Ridge was not from the Broad River section to the east but from the Holston section in Tennessee which, until it was admitted to the Union in 1796, was a part of North Carolina. Accordingly, until 1796 the history of the Baptists in Tennessee must be included in a history of North Carolina Baptists. On that account, that history, as told by Benedict,<sup>4</sup> with some abridgement, is given here.

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<sup>2</sup> Of these *Sketches* M. C. Lunsford, Clerk of the Association, says: ". . . Bro. Justice has made a worthy and most valuable contribution to Baptist history—not only to North Carolina, but also to the denomination in general. He has spent many years gathering material for these sketches, much of which would have been lost without his ardent labors.

"In these sketches we live again, as it were, with our brethren of generations past and gone.

"His years of ripe experience; his fine intellect and close observation; his untiring zeal for research; all these have eminently fitted Rev. Justice for the writing of these sketches."

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 214 ff.

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The first settlements in this State (Tennessee) were made on the Holston River and its waters, in East-Tennessee, and in the south-east corner of the State of Virginia; and in these settlements the first Baptist churches were established. It is said there were two churches gathered in this part of Tennessee, which was then a dangerous wilderness, some time before any of those arose, whose history we are now about to relate; but they were broken up and scattered, during the time of the Indian war. (1774). . . .

But the beginning of the first churches which have had a permanent standing was in the following manner: About the year 1780, William Murphy, James Keel, Thomas Murrell, Tidence Lane, Isaac Barton, Matthew Talbot, Joshua Kelly, and John Chastain, moved into what was called the Holston country, when it was in a wilderness state, and much exposed to the ravages and depredations of the Indians. These ministers were all Virginians, except Mr. Lane, who was from North-Carolina. They were accompanied by a considerable number of their brethren from the churches which they left, and were followed shortly after by Jonathan Mulky, William Reno, and some other ministers and brethren, and amongst the other emigrants there was a small body which went out in something like a church capacity. They removed from the old church at Sandy-Creek, in North Carolina, which was planted by Shubael Stearns; and as a branch of the mother church, they emigrated to the wilderness, and settled on Boon's Creek. The church is now called Buffaloe Ridge, and is under the pastoral care of Jonathan Mulky.

In 1781, one year after the settlement of most of the persons above mentioned, five or six churches having been established by the emigrants, they, for their mutual advantage and edification, concluded to meet together in conference twice in a year; this conference, they, in a short time, organized into a temporary Association, which they chose to place under the patronage and direction of the Sandy-Creek Association in North-Carolina. To this body they made annual returns of their proceedings, which they submitted for their inspection and approbation. But the remoteness of their situation rendered this measure so inconvenient, that by the approbation of their North-Carolina brethren, they, in 1786, erected their body into a distinct and independent Association by the name of Holston. This Association, at this time, consisted of the seven following churches, viz. Kendrick's Creek, Bent Creek, Beaver Creek, Greasy Cove, Cherokee, North Fork of Holston, and Lower French Broad. The ministers belonging to it at this time were Jonathan Mulky, Tidence Lane, Isaac Barton, James Keel, William Murphy, John Frost, and Alexander Chambers. A few of these ministers in a short time removed to other parts, but most of them became permanently stationed in the country, and have been diligent and



successful labourers in this part of the vineyard. Most of the early Baptists in this region were of the old Separate order; some, however, were Regulars; but the leading sentiments of both were Calvinistic, and there was so little difference in their notions of doctrine and discipline that these names were soon forgotten, and they went on together with great union and harmony. This Association adopted the Philadelphia Confessions of Faith, at the time of its constitution, and still adheres to the doctrinal sentiments contained in that instrument. . . . Some refreshing seasons were experienced at different times amongst the churches within the bounds of this Association, and it progressed with a good degree of prosperity until 1802, when, by a mutual agreement, a division, which had some time before been proposed, was effected. The Association at the time of this division contained thirty-six churches, and between two and three thousand members. The line of division was from Powel's River to the Flat Gap, on the Clinch Mountain, and thence by a crooked route to English's Mountain. All the churches to the north of this line remained with, and retained the name and constitution of the Holston Association; while those at the south of it were dismissed to form a new one, which they called Tennessee. . . . (The Tennessee Association) did not, like the mother Association, adopt the Confession of Faith.

The Baptists of whose early activities in East Tennessee Benedict has given the above account had no regard for State lines; in fact, until 1796 there were none; they preached wherever they found congregations hungry for the Gospel; going up the streams which had formed passes through the mountain ridges of the Alleghanies, very early they were finding congregations among the settlers on the French Broad, the Tuckaseigee, and the Pigeon rivers, and their tributaries, and from some of these congregations they constituted Baptist churches and before 1807—just how early is not known—they had brought at least three of them into the Holston Baptist Association. Of these early Baptist ministers little is definitely known, but it is certain that one of them, Rev. Thomas Snelson, was ordained at the church of Big Pigeon River which belonged to the Tennessee Association, and later was among the noteworthy ministers of the French Broad Association.

Possibly Ammons was mistaken in his supposition that

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the Baptists "took the lead" in the religious development of the French Broad region. The Methodists were laboring successfully in this section several years before the organization of the French Broad Association. In Grissom's excellent work, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, Chapter XVII, is a somewhat detailed account of the activities of the Methodists west of the Blue Ridge from 1780 to 1805. It is said,<sup>5</sup> ". . . at least as early as 1780 Andrew Yeargan, while on the Yadkin Circuit, made his way west of the Ridge, and took a large territory into his circuit. In 1783 the Holston Circuit was formed. . . . This circuit evidently embraced a portion of North Carolina." The chief development of the Methodists was from the east. In 1790 they had established a circuit known as the Lincoln Circuit, with churches in the county of that name. In 1793 this circuit was divided, and the part farthest west became known as Swannanoa Circuit. A succession of Methodist ministers were sent to labor in it:

1793—Samuel Edney. "No man did more for Methodism west of the Ridge than Samuel Edney."<sup>6</sup>

1794—Philip Sands.

1795—Abner Henly and Leonard Dyson.

1796—William Wilkerson and John Sale, "men who were above the ordinary," and Rev. Josiah Askew, presiding elder, "a strong man."<sup>7</sup>

1797—Benjamin Mathews.

1798—Thomas Mann, "a man of great spiritual power, and thoroughly consecrated to his work."<sup>8</sup>

1799—Nathan Jarratt.

1800—Josiah Philips and Samuel Ausley. In 1800 the circuit was called Morganton and Swannanoa, but in 1801 it was again called Swannanoa.

1801—Moses Floyd.

1802—Thomas L. Douglass and James Douthet, presiding elder.

1803—James Watson.

1804—James Taylor.

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<sup>5</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 290.

<sup>7</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 292.

<sup>8</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 294.

Bishop Asbury spent some time in western North Carolina in November, 1800, and reported on November 8, "We came to Thomas Foster's, and held a small meeting at his house."<sup>9</sup> Foster lived on the southern side of the Swannanoa River, about two and one-half miles south of Asheville; he built the first bridge across the river. He was a member of the Legislature from Buncombe, a man of prominence, and of considerable wealth. While in this section, Bishop Asbury also visited the "agreeable family"<sup>10</sup> of David L. Swain, now famed as an early president of the University of North Carolina, and Governor of the State. In 1803, the Bishop was again in this territory. With reference to the Swannanoa Circuit Grissom says further:<sup>11</sup> "The circuit was established in 1793 with seventy members. At the end of two years it had 236 members; and in 1799 a membership of 281 was reported," and<sup>12</sup> "The circuit did not have a rapid growth so far as numbers are concerned; for in 1805 there were only 311 members in the bounds of this large circuit."

The Presbyterians also were laboring in this section ten years before the organization of the French Broad Association. According to the well authenticated statement found in the history of the First Presbyterian Church of Asheville by George W. McCoy, Rev. George Newton, known from other sources to have been a pioneer Presbyterian preacher and teacher, came to Asheville in 1797 and opened an academy, the first west of the Blue Ridge in the present limits of North Carolina, in a log school house, where he conducted that famous school until 1814 when he left for Tennessee. During this period Newton provided weekly religious services in the academy, usually preaching himself, but welcoming visiting preachers, often Methodists, as often

<sup>9</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 300.

<sup>10</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 301.

<sup>11</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 296.

<sup>12</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 302.

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as they came. In 1805, Newton was present at the meeting of the Broad River Baptist Association, and received a cordial reception.<sup>13</sup>

In this early period before the organization of the French Broad Association, the activities of the Methodists and Presbyterians were such as told above. Though neither Ammons nor Justice give account of them, Ammons, at least, shows that he was aware of the presence of the Methodists. In his sketch of Elder Stephen Morgan, who as early as 1800 had constituted the Caney River Baptist Church, Ammons says: <sup>14</sup>

... He (Stephen Morgan) not only had to master the difficulties which were unavoidable in dealing with an uneducated and crude people, whose moral standard was not very high, but he had to face difficulties arising from another source. The Methodists had entered the country with its first settlers, and were much more numerous than the Baptists, and to add to the seriousness of the problem, most of the intelligence and culture was with the Methodists, and their ministers were better educated. Morgan was the man for the hour and the occasion. Bold by nature, and being well grounded in Scripture doctrines, he met his opponents with the Sword of the Spirit, and never did his colors trail in the dust. The Methodists never liked him, yet they believed him to be a Christian, honest in his convictions and upright in his motives, yet they feared him and never dared to meet him in open combat. His progress was slow, but he builded better than he knew, and the efforts of his opponents reflected on their own heads. The Baptists increased and the Methodists decreased, and ground that was wholly occupied by Methodists is now Baptist ground.

It was the custom for Methodist preachers to stigmatize the Baptists as mean-spirited, uncharitable and ignorant; this because they rejected infant baptism; and would recognize no act for baptism but immersion, and practiced Close Communion.

The Methodist historian, Grissom, also recognized the conflict of interests between the Baptists and Methodists in this general area, saying: <sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, p. 277.



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Many of the inhabitants regarded the Methodist preacher as an intruder in this land of theirs. He met hostility on every hand. Sometimes the persecution was very bitter.

It is Daniel Asbury, together with John McGee, to whom Grissom gives the credit for building the first Methodist church in the State west of the Catawba. It was built in 1791, "a small log house, with a shed on one side for the colored people," and was in the territory of the Lincoln Circuit, which "was made to embrace not only Lincoln, but also Rutherford and Burke, with portions of Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties in North Carolina and York District in South Carolina and that part of Spartanburg and Union districts which lies north of the Pacolet River."<sup>16</sup>

The above statements of Ammons and Grissom probably are a fair representation of religious conditions under which the French Broad Association began its work in 1807.

We now turn to the story of that organization and its progress for the years 1807 to 1907. Our chief source of information is Rev. John Ammons' *Outlines of History of French Broad Association*, though other sources have been freely used.

As stated above, the French Broad Association was formed in 1807 of six churches, three of which—French Broad, Cane Creek and Caney River—were churches of the Broad River Association, and three—Little Ivy, Locust Old Fields, and Newfound—churches of the Holston Association. Following the custom of the day, the new association was given the name of the church at which it was organized, the French Broad Baptist Church. Our earliest definite records about this church are found in Asplund's *Baptist Register*, 5th edition, covering the years 1790-1793, in which the French Broad Church is listed as a church in Buncombe County, constituted in 1791, a member of the Bethel Association; the number of members reported for

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<sup>16</sup> Grissom, *History of Methodism in North Carolina*, I, pages 273 and 274.

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the three years beginning in 1791 were in order 16, 18 and 28, which shows that it was already a progressive body. Its minister was Richard Newport.<sup>17</sup> In 1954, this church

<sup>17</sup> In the *North Carolina Baptist Historical Papers*, II, p. 125 f. (Jan. 1898), Dr. R. H. Lewis (the Baptist of that name) gives the following account of the French Broad Church: "The first Baptist church established west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in North Carolina is the French Broad, five miles west of Hendersonville in Henderson County, about one mile east of the French Broad River. I think the date of its organization was 1784 but am not sure.

"For the last forty years, more or less, it has held the same location, on the side of the main road, very near (about forty feet) from a mill pond (now dried up).

"It has been familiarly known and called 'The Mill Pond Church,' ever since holding the present site.

"I was a member of this church from 1870 till 1875—most of the time its Clerk. During my clerkship, the church requested me to decipher and transcribe the old Minutes. The old book was in good preservation—of square shape, coarse, strong paper and no lines. I copied it in full into a new book, and cautioned the church to keep the old volume with all diligence. They were very proud of their 'old Minutes,' and I hope that it is still in existence." Even with the help of the pastor of the Hendersonville First Baptist Church, I have been unable to find any trace of either the "old Minutes" or the copy made by Dr. Lewis.

Rev. A. I. Justice in his *Historical Sketches of the Carolina Baptist Association* appearing in the minutes of that association for the year 1924, says, page 16, "... the most authentic records show that French Broad was organized in 1789. . . . French Broad was constituted in the same year that the Bethel Association of Spartanburg, S. C., and adjoining counties in North Carolina, was organized."

Fuller information about the French Broad Church in its earlier years is found in *The Story of Henderson County* by Sadie Smathers Patton, at page 170, as follows: "There is no known list of the first members, or who the organizing minister of French Broad might have been. The first authentic record is found in the Minutes of Bethel Association of upper South Carolina, which shows that French Broad Baptist Church was admitted as a member of that body in 1792 and continued in the organization until 1800, reporting each year:

| Date | Minister        | Other Messengers to Association | No. of Members |
|------|-----------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1792 | Richard Newport | None                            | 18             |
| 1793 | Richard Newport | Nicholas Woodson (Woodfin)      |                |
|      |                 | John Boy (Boyleston)            | 28             |
| 1794 | Richard Newport | None                            | 29             |
| 1795 | None            | James Blythe                    |                |
|      |                 | James Boydstone                 | 32             |
| 1796 | None            | James Blythe                    |                |
|      |                 | Richard Boydstone               | 22             |
| 1797 | None            | David Kimzey                    | 22             |
| 1798 | James Chastain  | Nicholas Woodfin                | 24             |
| 1799 | Thomas Justice  | Thomas Abel                     | 34             |

"The Census of 1790 for the western portion of Rutherford County furnished the only means of throwing any light on the membership of this

which gave its name to the Association is a member of the Carolina Association with 58 members. The second Broad River Association church joining in the formation of the French Broad Association, the Cane River Church, is today a member of the Yancey Association with 257 members.<sup>18</sup>

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first organization, several of the names mentioned in the Bethel Association records being contained in it. . . .

"Richard Newport, who was the early minister of the church owned property and lived in Rutherford County,—as it exists today. Thomas Justice, Jr. . . . at one time lived near the head of Shaws Creek. His brother Amos, a few years later lived on the head of Little River. . . . Joel Blackwell, in 1786, owned land and was living on the south fork of White Oak Creek. . . . He is often mentioned as having preached at French Broad Baptist Church.

"The church at French Broad was dismissed from Bethel Association in 1800 to become one of a new group then being formed."

There is another French Broad Church which is in the New Found Association, and is not fifty miles distant from the French Broad here under discussion. It reported 185 members in 1953. It and the one under discussion are both North Carolina churches. However, the first Baptist church of which we have record to bear the name French Broad is a church of the Holston Association at Jefferson, Tennessee, near the mouth of the French Broad River, which was constituted in 1786, and another church called the Forks of the French Broad and Holston, constituted in 1789. So many different churches all bearing the name French Broad has caused much confusion.

<sup>18</sup> In the excellent sketch of Cane River Baptist Church, found in a publication of the Work Projects Administration, *Inventory of the Church Archives of North Carolina, Southern Baptist Convention, North Carolina Baptist State Convention, Yancey Baptist Association*, p. 13, part of the account of this church is as follows: "CANE RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH, 1800—. Cane River, Yancey County.

"Constituted in 1800, Cane River Baptist Church was a constituent member of the Broad River Baptist Association in South Carolina. Known as the 'Caney River Baptist Church,' it was located in that part of Buncombe County which was cut off in 1833 to become a part of Yancey County. In 1807, the church was one of three dismissed from the Broad River Baptist Association to unite with other churches in the formation of the French Broad Baptist Association. It withdrew from the French Broad to join the Big Ivy Baptist Association, and when the union of the two associations was effected in 1849, it united with the Bethlehem Baptist Church of the French Broad Baptist Association, the united congregations retaining the name of 'Cane River Baptist Church.' In 1888 the church was received by letter from the French Broad Baptist Association into the Yancey County Baptist Association, to which it has since belonged.

"It is locally reported that the church was constituted in a log house in which services were held until 1830 when a frame structure was occupied. In 1891-92, the congregation erected the present house of worship, a one-room frame structure with a seating capacity of 500. Dedicated in 1910, the building was painted and repaired in 1915. The first pastor is locally said to have been Rev. John Wheeler, 1807-10. A Sunday School was reported in 1893. Church membership in 1888 was 168; in 1898, 284; in 1909, 225; in 1919, 106; in 1928, 158; and in 1941, 186."



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The third, Cane Creek, on a stream of that name, located in the southern part of Buncombe County, was organized in 1805 by Humphrey Posey, and in 1806 became a member of the Broad River Association. Posey continued as its pastor, probably until he left North Carolina for Georgia in 1834, but certainly until 1812, when it reported 40 members.<sup>19</sup>

One of the Holston Association churches joining in the formation of the French Broad Association, the Little Ivy, has the distinction of being the only church that has been a member of the Association through all its years. A second Holston Association church, New Found, is now a member of the Buncombe County Association. Of the early history of these two churches there is little definite information. Probably tradition is correct that Little Ivy was constituted as early as 1796, being older than any of its sister churches of the Association except the French Broad. Both through all the years have been active and progressive. In 1952, the Little Ivy reported 129 members, and 182 in Sunday school, the New Found 376 members and 257 in Sunday school.

The third Holston River church was Locust Old Field,<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Posey's account of the organization of Cane Creek Church, as reported by Mrs. Patton, *Story of Henderson County*, p. 66, is as follows:

"In 1805, I commenced preaching of evenings in a destitute settlement near where I was teaching a school on Cane Creek. Brother James Whitaker and myself drew up Articles of Faith as we could not find any in the country, and we collected all the members intending to be in the constitution and examined them on the Articles. All being agreed a presbytery was invited to attend. The presbytery was pleased with our Articles of Faith and so the church was organized. Two of the members were at the same time ordained to the deacon's office and I was ordained to the work of the ministry. At the next meeting I baptized four professed believers and the work of the Lord continued for a length of time. Some were received for baptism at almost every meeting."

The above is found in Mrs. Patton's sketch of Posey, much of which will be given in the chapter on the Cherokee Mission at Valley Towns established by Posey in 1817.

<sup>20</sup> Of this the following sketch by J. R. Greene, appeared in the *Wake Forest Student*, Vol. XXVI, September 1906, p. 46f.:

"LOCUST FIELD CHURCH, HAYWOOD COUNTY

"Locust Field Baptist Church is located at Canton, Haywood County, N. C., and was organized in 1803 with thirteen charter members.

"In the days of the Revolutionary War, a soldier died by the roadside



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and though it has lost its name, it is the mother church of the several branches of the Canton Baptist Church and of other large churches in northern Haywood County. In 1812 it had 78 members and with the exception of New Found, which had 89 members, was the largest church in the Association. In 1828 or 1829 it became a member of

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from a case of cramp colic, here on the hill top where the church now stands, and was buried all alone in a locust field near by. It is claimed by old people now living in this section that he was the first white man buried in North Carolina west of Asheville. Some one cared for the grave, and when the population grew larger and a church was needed, it was unanimously decided to build it by this grave as a token of respect for the soldier.

"Jno. Gooch, Jno. Hall, Samuel Able and wife, Margaret Chambers, Jno. Osborne, Wm. Scott, and Erwin Brown were charter members. Humphrey Posey, Adam Corn, and Sion Bly(the) were the preachers who organized the church. They were faithful pioneer preachers and did much work among the mountains. The first members of this church came from French Broad Church, in Buncombe County, which is the oldest church in Western North Carolina, and also from churches in Eastern North Carolina. The early settlers of this community were of English, Dutch and Scotch-Irish descent. Other denominations did not enter this community till about 1825. Baptists are yet in the majority. Wm. Haynes, Meritt Rickman, Chas. Brindle, C. B. Mingus, Henry Connor, John Ammons, Thos. Henson, and Humphrey Posey were the preachers in this section before the war of 1861. Humphrey Posey became one of the leading men among North Carolina Baptists. His memory, as well as that of the other pioneer preachers of this county, is held sacred. They were not extensively educated, but they had a deep love for God and humanity, and this made them powers for good. They worked on their farms and walked many miles to preach on Sunday.

"Locust Field was first a member of French Broad Association, which was organized in 1807. Afterward it joined Tuckasegee Association, which was organized in 1829, and remained in this Association until 1886, when the Haywood County Association was organized, of which it is still (1906) a member. This church belonged to the State Convention till 1845, when the Western North Carolina Convention was organized. From that time it was a member of the Western Convention till the East and West united again. The Western Convention met with this church twice. During the Civil War, services were kept up, C. B. Mingus being pastor, and at the close of the war the church was blessed with one of the greatest revivals in all its history.

"About 1830, Sunday school work was begun by this church, and has been carried on most of the time since with much interest.

"Locust Field is mother to Crabtree, Waynesville, Bethel, Oak Grove, Hominy, and Pleasant Hill. Some of these churches are doing good work. Waynesville has the best house of worship of any church west of Asheville.

"The first public school taught in Haywood County was taught in the house in which Locust Field Church was organized. The house has been re-built twice, but never moved from the first location. In the early days of the church, slaves were members, having received permission from their masters to join. They were instructed by white preachers from the pulpit

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the Tuckasee Association, and remained in it until the organization of the Haywood Association in 1886.

Benedict, followed by Ammons and Justice, names the following as the ministers of the French Broad at the beginning:<sup>21</sup> Thomas Snelson, Thomas Justice, Sion Blythe, Benjamin King, Humphrey Posey, and Stephen Morgan. Of these Ammons says:<sup>22</sup>

... None of these were men of culture, Posey being the only man among them who had obtained more than the bare elements of an English education, but they were men of brain and brawn, and what counts for more, God had put them into ministry—they had not run before they were sent, nor had they answered before they were called—they were devoted to the work of saving souls.

Justice has a like account,<sup>23</sup> saying:

... These men were flaming evangelists, going everywhere proclaiming the gospel of Christ as God's only means of saving a lost world. None of them made any claim to scholarship, and some of them had only the bare rudiments of an English education; yet they were men of God, and went forth with a conviction that God had called them into the ministry. This conviction made them stalwart, and filled them with that burning zeal which accounts for the rapid progress made by Baptists in those early days.

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and in their quarters, and were baptized by white preachers. They contributed very little to church expenses. At this time the pastor received no salary.

"The church has ordained to the ministry seven preachers, some of whom have done and are doing good work.

"During the 103 years of its existence it has stood as a 'city set on a hill,' a light to the community. Its members, while they have never been wealthy, have been independent, energetic livers. They have been fair samples of the old Southern chivalry in every respect.

"Once every year there is a reunion or old folks' day, when all the old members and citizens meet and sing the old songs that they used to sing, and discuss such topics as may be desirable. This is always a great and happy day, and is attended by thousands of people from far and near, and it greatly helps to keep up that spirit of love that is so characteristic of this people."

<sup>21</sup> Benedict, *History of the Baptists*, II, p. 114; Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, pp. 6-7; *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 17.

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However, as is well known, Humphrey Posey is today considered one of the ablest of American Baptists, while Stephen Morgan, according to the sketch given by Ammons,<sup>24</sup> served the churches of the Association most efficiently and acceptably for a half century—"his was pioneer work, and well and truly he did it."

In 1812 when the French Broad Association met again at French Broad Church, Thomas Snelson, then pastor of the New Found Church, preached the sermon, Stephen Morgan, pastor of New Found was moderator; Benjamin King, Sion Blythe, and Jere Taylor, licentiate, were ministers of the French Broad Church which had 41 members, while Humphrey Posey was pastor of Cane Creek with 40 members. Other churches were served by ministers not previously named—Little Ivy with 44 members, by Moses Freeman; Mud Creek, a new church with 31 members, by Joseph Byers; Bethel, also new, with 42 members, by Perminter Morgan, father of Stephen Morgan; Mountain Page, new, 40 members, by William Kinsey; Flat Creek, new, 22 members, pastor not named.

For the next ten years detailed information about the progress of the French Broad Association, its members and ministers is scant or lacking. In a few years, says Ammons,<sup>25</sup> the number of churches was greatly increased, and they were scattered over almost the entire region west of the Blue Ridge in the present counties of Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Yancey, Mitchell, Transylvania, Haywood, Jackson and Macon, "and embraced in their membership most of the leading citizenship of the country, or several communities in which they were situated." This great increase of which Ammons speaks had come during a period of much dissension among the Baptists of this

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<sup>24</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 50.

<sup>25</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 7.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

region. Some one has rightly remarked "Let the brethren quarrel; the more quarreling, the more Baptists." From the first, the Baptist churches which organized the French Broad Association were divided, three from the Broad River Association, three from the Holston, and differed on the emphasis they put on Articles of Faith and Baptist doctrines; in the Broad River several of the leading Baptist ministers were ardent Calvinists and champions of the Doctrine of Election, and in general were Regular Baptists, accepting in full the Philadelphia Confession and Articles of Faith based upon it; on the other hand, the three churches that came to the French Broad from the Holston Association and their ministers had a Separate Baptist heritage, and like Shubal Stearns thought the New Testament a sufficient confession of faith, and like him, refused to accept Higher Calvinism and the Doctrine of Election, and were classed as Arminians and Free Willers. Probably, it was among the ministers and leaders rather than among the members generally that this difference was most pronounced, and it was less marked in some churches than in others. Little or nothing is told of it in the sections where Rev. Humphrey Posey labored—southern Buncombe, Haywood, Jackson, Macon and adjoining counties, but indications are that there was great religious activity there. In other sections—northern Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, Yancey and Mitchell, very early great dissension, causing a serious situation, arose. With reference to this Justice says: <sup>26</sup>

Even before the Salem Association was organized, the seed of disruption that was destined to produce a harvest of dissension, discord, and division that would require a generation to permanently heal, had been sown.

Back in the early days, the brethren were great sticklers for doctrine. The questions of election and moral free agency were among those upon which there was great disagreement and much

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<sup>26</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 17f.



## FRENCH BROAD

heated controversy—the parties on each side doubtless going to the extreme. In 1828, as a result of the strife engendered by these discussions, the French Broad Association split asunder, and a new association, called the Big Ivy, was organized. The leading spirits in these disturbances were Stephen Morgan and Garrett Deweese. They were both men of good character and wide influence, and each had his following. Many felt at the time that the division was unfortunate if not a calamity. Be it said however, to the credit of the brethren on both sides of this controversy, that after 20 years the two bodies came peacefully together, all their differences were amicably settled, the Big Ivy dissolved, and its twenty-five churches went back into the French Broad Association.

From Ammons' longer account, the following extracts are made:

From the organization of the French Broad Association there had been more or less questioning about doctrines and discipline; all of the leading spirits were Calvinistic, but there were many minds that revolted at the sterner aspects of Calvinism. Men generally held to the idea of moral free agency. . . . These questions were taken up by the preachers and became, not only the grounds of contention and strife, but, in 1827, resulted in a division and the organization of the Big Ivy Association. . . . The principal question of difference was the doctrine of Election.

One party held that God, from eternity, had freely ordained whatsoever comes to pass, that Christ died for the Elect; that these would be effectually called, sanctified and saved, while the rest would be left to perish in their blindness. As, almost always, in such cases, the parties went to extremes, those who advocated the doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty were often justly chargeable with being Antinomian. This was the result of ignorance, the advocates not being able to see the logical conclusion to which their reasoning led. On the other hand, those who entertained the opposite view often found themselves floundering in the rankest Arminianism.

. . . The leading spirits in these disturbances were Stephen Morgan and Garret(t) Deweese.<sup>27</sup>

These elements of controversy had gone into every community where the Baptists had gone, and so at an early day they developed in the French Broad Association. Stephen Morgan was a leader among his people; he was a man of a rugged mold,

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<sup>27</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, pp. 10-11.

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physically, intellectually and morally. Was a man of strong convictions and decisive in character—a radical rather than conservative. He embraced the Calvinistic views with all the ardor of his soul. This gave offense to those who entertained different views; and as these questions were agitated they gave rise to contentions which resulted in divisions.

Just what Morgan's views were is at this day unknown, but he held and taught the doctrine of Election, i. e., that God, from all eternity, chose some men to Eternal Life, without any regard to faith or good works; that these would be Called, Sanctified and Saved; that the rest were Reprobates, and were doomed to Eternal Damnation; that the number of the saved was fixed and determined, and could neither be added to nor diminished.

These differences drove the brethren asunder, and the bitterness was such that persons living in the same community would have but little intercourse with each other.

Deweese was charged with heresy, or false doctrine; and with the assistance of Morgan and a few others from other churches was, by a minority of his church, excluded; but the great majority of his church stood by him and followed his lead.

To be a Freewiller was enough to make one odious with all who followed Morgan, so that churches meeting in the same community had no fellowship with each other and but little intercourse among their members. Criminations and recriminations were the order of the day, and often became sources of scandal. On the other hand, Morgan and his followers were called Antinomians, and their doctrines were believed to be the doctrines of devils.<sup>28</sup>

Though our information is scant, it is known that in the years after 1812 when the Association met at French Broad Church, the Baptists, both Separates and Regulars, were very active in all directions. In a few years Humphrey

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<sup>28</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, pp. 15-16. Somewhat more detailed is this further statement, page 8, of Ammons: "For want of a broader information and culture, questions of order and doctrine were often arising, which occasioned confusion and sometimes divisions. The first of these of which the writer has any information arose in River Hill Church, near where the town of Marshall now stands. The grounds of contention were at first a matter of discipline, but it soon took a doctrinal turn. This resulted in a division in the church, which gave rise to the establishment of Walnut Creek Church, and the old church finally fell to pieces.

"This disturbance and division was created and led by Isaac Tillery, who was a preacher, and at the time of the trouble the pastor of the church. He became an Antinomian, and finally made shipwreck and went to the bad. Of the progress of the work for twenty years very little is known, as no records have been preserved."

## FRENCH BROAD

Posey, who seemingly avoided being classified as either Separate or Regular, had been the leader in a Baptist development that extended through the present counties of Haywood and Jackson into Macon and Cherokee, and into Georgia, and resulted in the formation of Baptist churches which in 1829 joined in the formation of the Tuckaseigee Association. Posey had not been content to work only among the white settlers but with the encouragement of the churches was bringing the Gospel of Salvation to the villages of the Cherokee Indians, and before 1817 had established a mission among them at Valley Towns near Andrews in the present county of Cherokee, of which forgotten work an account will be given in the last chapter of this volume.

Generally, however, the division between the Regulars and Separates persisted. Soon after the expulsion of De-weese from his church, and doubtless as a result of the high-handed action of Morgan, the Separate Baptist churches of the section went apart and founded a new association, the Big Ivy. Though the story of this association and its activities have been often assumed to be only an episode in the history of French Broad Association, the Big Ivy did a work and exerted an influence of epochal importance among the Baptists, not only of the French Broad region, but also of the entire state of North Carolina. In a history of North Carolina Baptists it deserves a chapter of its own, which is now given.

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## XXVII

### BIG IVY ASSOCIATION

Neither Ammons nor Justice give any connected account of the Big Ivy Association, but they give much information about it in scattered statements, on which, and on the minutes of the body for 1841, the story found below is based.<sup>1</sup>

Probably the Association got its name, "Big Ivy," from the church where it first met, possibly the church of that name near Barnardsville in Buncombe County. Ammons says:<sup>2</sup> "These questions . . . , in 1827, resulted in a division (of the French Broad Association) and the organization of the Big Ivy Association," while Justice<sup>3</sup> gives the year 1828 as the time of organization. Probably these dates are of preliminary meetings since the minutes for 1841 say that the organization was completed and the constitution adopted on October 6, 1829, at Union Meeting House, today the name of a church of the New Found Association. Ammons says further<sup>4</sup> that two years later, 1831, according to the Minutes of that year, the Big Ivy had seven churches with 233 members, and in 1848, the last session but one,

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<sup>1</sup> The "Baptist Collection" in the Wake Forest College Library, has the Minutes of the Big Ivy Association for only one year, 1841. Ammons, however, writing in 1906, had access to the minutes for all years of the Association's history.

<sup>2</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College* p. 12.



twenty-five churches with 732 members. Further account will be given below of the progress of the Association, but first is given a more detailed account of its organization and its constitution.

The Preamble of the Constitution as printed in the Minutes of 1841, page 7, reads:

As a series of events hath taken place, which have made it necessary for us to separate ourselves from that denomination of Christians called United Baptists; and it being necessary for every religious community to have some form of government: we, therefore, the separate Baptist Association, assembled at Union meeting-house, the 6th of October, 1829, adopt the following as our Constitution:

The Constitution then given is brief, differing little from the articles found in other Baptist associations of the time. It gives a plan of organization, representation of churches by delegates, officers and their duties, and closes with an article, Number 16, which reads: "That the Association shall assume no higher authority than an advisory council." This is followed by "Rules of Decorum," thirteen rules differing little from the rules generally observed by deliberative bodies of the time and since.

Article 12 of the Constitution proper provides: "That any church may become a member of the Association by making application by letter and delegates, and adopting our Articles of Faith." The Articles of Faith appeared in the Minutes of 1838, from which they were copied by Ammons as follows:<sup>5</sup>

1. "We believe in one only true and living God; and notwithstanding there are three that bear record in heaven—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—yet there is but one in substance, equal in power and glory, and can not be divided, either in principle or practice, and not liable to change.

2. We believe the Old and New Testaments is the word of God,

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<sup>5</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 13.

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and a sufficiency is therein contained for our instruction, and they are the only rule of faith and practice.

3. We believe in the doctrine of Original sin, and that all mankind, since the fall, are by nature the children of Wrath, one as much as another.

4. We believe in man's impotency, or inability to recover himself out of the fallen state he is in, therefore a Saviour is absolutely needed.

5. We believe that sinners are Justified in the sight of God only by the imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ.

6. We believe in the perseverance of the Saints in grace—that they are born again, or adopted into the family of Heaven—that they become equal heirs with Jesus Christ, and that He will raise them up at the last day.

7. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are gospel Ordinances and true believers the proper subjects, and we admit of no other knowingly.

8. We believe that the true mode of Baptism is to baptize or immerse a person, by their own consent, once in water, back foremost, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and of a General Judgment, where all will be judged according to the deeds done in the body.

10. We believe the punishment of the wicked will be Everlasting and the joys of the righteous will be Eternal after death.

11. We believe washing one another's feet is a command of Christ left with His disciples, and ought to be practiced by His followers.

12. We believe that no one has a right to administer the Ordinances but such as are legally called and qualified thereunto.

13. We believe it is the duty of all church members to attend their church meetings, and it is the duty of the church to deal with them for neglecting the same.

14. We believe it is the duty of all church members to contribute to the support of the gospel and defray all reasonable expenses of the church, never neglecting the poor, according to their several abilities.

15. We believe that any doctrine that goes to encourage or indulge people in their sins, or cause them to settle down on anything short of saving faith in Christ, for salvation, is erroneous, and all such doctrines will be rejected by us.

16. None of the above-named articles shall be so construed as to hold with Particular and Eternal Election and Reprobation, or

so as to make God partial, either directly or indirectly, so as to injure any of the children of men."

The Big Ivy was a Separate Baptist body, and the Articles of Faith as given above constitute what may be called a Separate Baptist Confession of Faith, keeping in mind the fact that the early Separate Baptists insisted that the New Testament was sufficient. With some changes in wording and emphasis nearly all these articles are in essential agreement with the Articles as given by Asplund, already discussed in our chapter on the Yadkin Association, to which readers are referred. Those which may need further explanation are the ones numbered 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, and 16, and of these only one, Article 16, repudiating acceptance of the Doctrine of Election as a condition of church membership, is essentially different. Though not given in Asplund's list of the Articles of Faith, the doctrines stated in Articles 13, 14, and 15 have been generally accepted by Baptists. Not only the Separate Baptists, but others, have usually believed that it is (1) the duty of church members to attend church meetings, and (2) to contribute to the support of the church and not to neglect the poor, and (3) that the churches should stand firmly against any doctrine that would encourage people in their sins, or to believe that there was salvation in any other way than by "saving faith in Christ." The Big Ivy Baptists are to be highly commended, however, for adding these things to their Articles of Faith.

Article 11 recommending "washing one another's feet, (as) a command of Christ left with his disciples which ought to be practiced by His followers," does not, it will be observed, prescribe it as a church ordinance, though it was regularly so used by the earliest Baptist churches in North Carolina, those of the General Baptists, and is still so used by the Free Will Baptist in North Carolina and elsewhere.

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That it was the common practice of the churches of the French Broad Association in its earliest years is shown by Mrs. Patton's statement,<sup>6</sup> "Footwashing was considered as one of the sacraments among the early Baptists, and had its part in their regular service. The pioneers were utterly without self-consciousness and their patriarchial simplicity and dignity made of this humble service an act which left its impression on all who attended." She gives with many interesting details an account of such a service.

Article 8, that on the mode of baptism, was without doubt acceptable to the churches in the French Broad as well as to those in the Big Ivy. In many parts of western North Carolina, west of the Blue Ridge and elsewhere, there were large settlements of Germans, many of them Baptists, who established churches of their own, and were known as Tunkards, sometimes Dunkers, or German Baptists. They were a noble body of Christians, differing little or not at all from their English Baptist brethren except that their mode of baptism was to dip three times, face down.

It is Article 16 that is distinctive. It is an outright rejection and repudiation of the Doctrine of Election, and in this way differs radically from the statements in the Abstract of Articles of Faith based on the Philadelphia Confession, as found in the various editions of Asplund's *Register*, and as given above at the end of our chapter on the Yadkin Association. The Regular Baptist scholars who drew up that Abstract doubtless thought it would be generally used in the organization of churches and associations and be effective in gaining their general acceptance of the Philadelphia Confession and of the Doctrine of Election in all its High Calvinism. Shubal Stearns, however, had gathered the people of North Carolina into the Separate Baptist churches by preaching a gentler and more soul-winning gospel.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Story of Henderson County*, p. 173.



## BIG IVY

In 1831, two years after the organization, in the Big Ivy Association were seven churches with 233 members. Our next check is ten years later, when the minutes of the Association for 1841, meeting at Middle Fork Meeting House, Yancey County, show that the Association then had 14 churches with a total membership of 403, and that during the year 33 had been received by baptism and 18 by letter. These churches, together with their ministers were:

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Caney River     | None reported   |
| Middle Fork     | Jacob Midcalf   |
| Liberty         | John Harwood  |
| Whiteoak Creek  | Moses Peterson, minister,<br>Leonard Buchanan, licentiate |
| Toe River       | James Arrowood, licentiate                                |
| Smyrna          | None reported   |
| Avery's Creek   | William C. Berry  |
| Beaver Creek    | None reported   |
| Cranberry       | None reported   |
| Boiling Spring  | S. S. Burdett   |
| Bolen's Creek   | James Rhea  |
| Burning Town    | William Deweese   |
| Green Mountain  | Jacob Silver  |
| Gabriel's Creek | C. M. Phillips  |

Many of these churches have continued with the same names until this day. The greater number were in the present counties of Buncombe, Madison and Yancey, but several were far removed, among them being Burning Town, a church in Macon County, prosperous through all the years, which in 1953 reported 181 members and 100 in Sunday school. Another was Boiling Spring, the South Carolina church of the name, near Spartanburg. All but one of these churches sent delegates. Elder William Deweese, the Burning Town minister, preached the introductory sermon; S. S. Burdett, the Boiling Spring minister, was elected moderator, and Brother L. Palmer of the Liberty Church, clerk. At this time the Big Ivy was in correspondence with East Tennessee, the Mount Zion and the Chattahoochie

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

associations. From the East Tennessee the messengers were Elders James M. Bryan and Reuben Coffee, "who friendly took a part in our council." It is known that the Catawba River Association not only did not correspond with the Big Ivy, but also for one year broke off its correspondence with the French Broad because that association had come into friendly relationship with the Big Ivy.

It is to be noticed that the Big Ivy Association of this year was already making provision for Union Meetings, and Elders Deweese and Phillips, with Daniel Carter "were appointed a committee to arrange" for them. They

Appointed four Union Meetings to be holden between this and the next Association. The 1st, at Burning Town, Macon county, N. C., to commence Friday before the 3rd Sabbath in October next; Reuben Deaver and Wm. C. Berry to attend. 2d. At Boiling Spring, Spartanburg District, S. C., to commence Friday before the 2d Sabbath in November; Jas. Rhea, Moses Peterson and Wm. C. Berry to attend. 3d. At Cany River, Yancey county, N. C., to commence on Friday before the 3d Sabbath in November; Jacob Silver, C. M. Phillips and Wm. Deweese to attend. 4th. At Beaver Creek, Yancey County, N. C., to commence on Friday before the 4th Sabbath in May; Jesse Rhea, S. S. Burdett, Jacob Midcalf and Charles M. Phillips to attend.

At this same meeting in 1841, action was deferred on a query from the Toe River Church: "Why do not all Christians commune together?—or is there no chance by Gospel order?" However, we have no real evidence that the Big Ivy ever showed any favor to open communion in its churches. That it was its purpose to co-operate with other Baptists is indicated by the passage of the following two resolutions:

*Resolved*, That we will unite with our beloved brethren holding the same Gospel doctrines, and entertaining the same views in regard to church discipline, in a general meeting to be holden at some time and place most suitable for all the denominations to be represented. *Resolved*, That we will invite those Associations with whom we correspond to unite with us in holding such a meeting.

## BIG IVY

The next meeting of the Association, that of 1842, was to be at Avery's Creek, Buncombe County.

Our next check is for the year 1848 when, according to Ammons<sup>7</sup> the Big Ivy Association had 25 churches, with 732 members. Accounting for this increase Ammons says:<sup>8</sup>

. . . All the preachers belonging to this body were intensely evangelical, they went everywhere preaching the word, and success attended their efforts; churches increased in membership, new churches were planted, and the doctrines which they preached were generally held to be the doctrines of God's word. . . .

The ministers belonging to this body, (in 1848), were S. Byrd, J. M. Bryant, J. Midcalf, L. Buchannan, J. Buchannan, J. Arrowood, J. Silver, C. M. Phillips, W. C. Berry, T. J. Rollins, R. Deaver, Wm. Deweese, James Rhea, Jesse Rhea, J. Wheeler, M. Peterson, J. W. Ayer, E. Chasteen, J. Gun, L. M. Berry and Wm. Sprinkle. Berry and Sprinkle were not ordained.

. . . J. M. Bryant, W. C. Berry and J. M. Runnion were men of some literary attainments, while L. M. Berry was, for that day, a scholarly man, and rose to eminence and distinction in the ministry.

Most of them were noted for piety and for zeal and devotion to the Lord's work; and dying in good old age left their work to follow them for the glory of God. The Big Ivy brethren were not heterodox as they have been represented, they were sounder than their creed, and the record shows that they were truly evangelical.

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<sup>7</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 12f.

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## XXVIII

### AFTER 1848

Since it was the Big Ivy Association that had prevailed in gaining acceptance in the churches west of the Blue Ridge for its views on the Doctrine of Election, and the strife had ended, it was fitting that any proposition for reunion should be made by that body. And so it was. The following is an abbreviation of Ammons' account of it:<sup>1</sup>

In the Minutes for 1847 we find this query from Gabriel's Creek Church: "Inasmuch as the doctrine held by the United Baptists, which we protested against, has measurably subsided, would it be gospel order to invite those of that body which agree with us in sentiment to the Communion Table?" "Answer: We think it would."

At the session of 1847 correspondence was offered to French Broad and . . . was accepted by the French Broad at its session in 1848, held at Grassy Creek, in Yancey County. . . . The next year the union was effected, and the two associations became one under the name of French Broad.

Though the name was that of one association, the French Broad, its doctrine, and in particular that on repudiation of Election, was expressly declared to be that of the other association, the Big Ivy, and on its formation in 1848 the reunited French Broad adopted Article 16 of the Big Ivy Articles of Faith practically word for word, as follows: "This Association will discountenance and repudiate the

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<sup>1</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 17.



doctrine of particular, personal, unconditional, and eternal election and reprobation.”<sup>2</sup>

The churches joining in the reunited association were twenty-five or twenty-six Big Ivy churches, located for the most part in Madison, Yancey, and Mitchell counties, and eleven French Broad churches, “all north and west of Asheville.”<sup>3</sup> “The number of churches in the consolidation was thirty-seven, with a membership of 1,592.”<sup>4</sup> These were only a minor part of the churches holding to the Articles of Faith of the body inasmuch as some of the churches were already organized in other associations. Of this an account will be given below, but we now turn to the story of the new French Broad Association in its early years, 1848-1861, following Ammons:<sup>5</sup>

. . . The progress of the work, after the consolidation, was very satisfactory; there were brethren in both bodies who had labored very hard to effect a reconciliation. Now that this was consummated it gave great impetus to the work; revivals were held in many of the churches, and they grew and prospered as never before. The preachers helped each other in these meetings; sometimes a half dozen or more preachers co-operated in these meetings; there was no rivalry, but complete harmony and co-operation, their labors were greatly blessed, the old spirit of strife was dead, and hundreds were added unto the churches. . . . Where there were two churches in the same community they united and formed one church, sometimes taking the name of the Big Ivy Church, and at others that of the French Broad. . . .

In September, 1854, a meeting was held at Little Ivy by Rev. Wm. Keith, the pastor, and a leader in the French Broad, and Rev. James Blythe, a leader in the opposing faction, that was wonderful in its results. At the close of about ten days there were sixty-five persons baptized into the fellowship of the church. From this meeting the revival spread to other churches and communities

<sup>2</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 19f.

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till it became general throughout the Association, and hundreds were added unto the churches. This Association since the union has been peculiarly distinguished by the spirit of evangelism. . . .

From the union of the French Broad and Big Ivy Associations there had been continual growth and increase till the beginning of the war in 1861.<sup>6</sup> Churches had been organized at Upper Laurel, East Fork, Mar's Hill, and Ivy Gap, and the old churches had increased in membership and efficiency. The session for 1861 was held with the church at Cane River. . . .

In 1952 the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* shows that the French Broad Association had 46 churches, all or nearly all in Madison County, with 8,045 members and 5,316 in Sunday school.

When the consolidated French Broad Association was organized in 1848, "its churches were scattered over the territory now embraced in north Buncombe, Madison, Yancey and Mitchell counties."<sup>7</sup> In 1849, it dismissed eleven of these churches, with 666 members and served by twelve ministers, all but two of whom had belonged to the Big Ivy Association, to join in the formation on October 5, 1849, of a new association, the Roan Mountain, which in 1884 became the Mitchell County Association. "This reduced the number of churches remaining in the French Broad to twenty-six, with a membership of 1,204, and its territory very much reduced." In general the churches of the Roan Mountain Association were loyal to the Big Ivy Articles of Faith, but "there had been a tendency on the part of some brethren to practice Open Communion, and some of the churches had been impregnated with this leaven."<sup>8</sup> The Roan Mountain took wise and effective measures to correct this, causing the withdrawal of five churches which, in 1851, became "a distinct body, by the

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<sup>6</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 21f.

name of the Tow River Freewill Christian Communion Baptists,"<sup>9</sup> with which group the Roan Mountain and other associations refused correspondence.

Account of the further early development of the Baptists in this particular region is given in *Inventory of the Church Archives of North Carolina . . . Yancey Baptist Association*, made by the Work Projects Administration, from which the following extracts are taken:<sup>10</sup>

The history of the Yancey Baptist Association begins properly in 1849 when the majority of the Baptist churches in Yancey County, which at that time embraced part of what is now Mitchell County, united to form the Roan Mountain Baptist Association. . . . In 1861 Mitchell County was formed, and at the meeting of the association in 1863 two divisions were set up within the Roan Mountain body, the first embracing the churches in Yancey County, and the second, those which lay in Mitchell County and to the east of the Blue Ridge. Seven years later, in September 1870, the association voted to divide, the line of division to be the turn-pike leading from Marion in McDowell County through Mitchell County to the top of Iron Mountain on the North Carolina-Tennessee line. Churches to the north of this line were to constitute the Roan Mountain Baptist Association. Churches to the south were to meet on the Friday before the third Sabbath in October at Zion Church in Yancey County to organize the Black Mountain Baptist Association. It was this Black Mountain Baptist Association which about 1887 changed its name to the Yancey County Baptist Association, which in turn, in 1915, changed the name to the Yancey Baptist Association. . . . Evidence is afforded by the minutes of the Western North Carolina Baptist Convention, of which the Black Mountain Association was a member. In these minutes the Yancey County Baptist Association appeared for the first time in 1889 when the Black Mountain Baptist Association was omitted. In the minutes of the preceding year the list of ministers of the Black Mountain Baptist Association had been the same as that in the minutes of the Yancey County Baptist Association for the same year.

In 1952 the Mitchell Association reported 36 churches with 6,864 members and 4,695 in Sunday school; the Yan-

<sup>9</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> Pages 2-3.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

cey Association reported 33 churches with 5,310 members and 3,381 in Sunday school.

A second development in another part of the territory of the consolidated French Broad Association was the New Found Association, of which Ammons gives the following account:<sup>11</sup>

In the year 1855, the New Found Association was organized at Flat Creek in Buncombe County. The following churches were dismissed from French Broad to enter into this new organization, viz: Flat Creek, Turkey Creek, New Found, Bethel, in Buncombe County, and Bear Creek, Spring Creek, and Little Mountain, in Madison County.

The territory of the Association then embraced that part of Madison County northeast of the French Broad River, a portion of Yancey County, with two or three churches in Tennessee.

In 1952 the New Found Association reported 32 churches, with 4,029 members and 2,242 in Sunday school.

Such was the development in the new French Broad Association formed in 1848 by the union of the old French Broad and the Big Ivy associations of churches nearly all north of Henderson County, in the counties of Buncombe (northern part), Madison, Yancey and Mitchell, and where, in 1952, as reported in the *North Carolina Baptist Annual*, the statistics for the four associations were:

| <i>Association</i>    | <i>Date of Formation</i> | <i>Number of Churches</i> | <i>Number of Members</i> | <i>Number in Sunday School</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| French Broad          | 1807 (1848)              | 46                        | 8,045                    | 5,316                          |
| Mitchell (first Roan) | 1849 (1884)              | 36                        | 6,864                    | 4,695                          |
| Yancey                | 1888                     | 33                        | 5,310                    | 3,381                          |
| New Found             | 1856                     | 32                        | 4,029                    | 2,242                          |
| Totals                |                          | 147                       | 24,248                   | 15,634                         |

"The first (Sunday) school established was at Gabriel's Creek, about 1853."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Ammons, *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 25.



## AFTER 1848

There was a contemporary Baptist development in the territory to the south, in southern Buncombe and the present counties of Henderson, Haywood, Transylvania, Jackson, Swain, Graham, Macon, Cherokee and Clay. The *North Carolina Baptist Annual* for 1952 shows in these counties ten Baptist associations, which, with dates of each, number of churches, number of members, and number in the Sunday schools, were as follows:

| <i>Association</i>     | <i>Date of Formation</i> | <i>Number of Churches</i> | <i>Number of Members</i> | <i>Number in Sunday School</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Buncombe               | 1882                     | 83                        | 23,201                   | 18,464                         |
| Carolina               | 1877                     | 60                        | 11,773                   | 8,647                          |
| Haywood                | 1886                     | 52                        | 10,340                   | 9,215                          |
| Transylvania           | 1882                     | 30                        | 5,103                    | 3,785                          |
| Cherokee (Indian)      | 1882                     | 15                        | 1,136                    | 953                            |
| Tuckaseigee            | 1829                     | 48                        | 7,853                    | 5,407                          |
| Tennessee River        | 1862                     | 46                        | 7,459                    | 4,470                          |
| Macon                  | 1904                     | 42                        | 7,089                    | 4,435                          |
| Western North Carolina | 1885                     | 46                        | 7,756                    | 5,237                          |
| West Liberty           | 1850                     | 29                        | 3,266                    | 1,830                          |
| Totals                 |                          | 451                       | 84,976                   | 62,443                         |

This makes a total for the entire area of 598 churches, with 109,224 members and 78,077 in Sunday school.

The first of the associations to be established in this southern section of the original French Broad was the Tuckaseigee, which was organized in 1829, only a year later than the Big Ivy. Of this association A. H. Sims, historian, gives the following in the Minutes of 1889, sixty years after the organization:

We have on hand a complete file of minutes, and some other papers. We find from the minutes that the Tuckaseigee Association was constituted in 1829 with 9 churches and 376 members. There have been 6,936 baptized into her fellowship since that time. 845 of her members have gone to their great reward. 1,004 members have been dismissed by letter to constitute the Haywood County Association; also 143 to join the Tennessee River Association, and 1,677 members have been excluded from the fellowship of the churches. We now have 38 churches with a membership of 3,272.

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

The constitutions and Articles of Faith of the Tuckasegee and the Haywood associations were often printed in the minutes. The Articles of Faith are abbreviated from those found in the "System" of the Broad River Association, with the omission of articles of a controversial nature, such as those on Election. Possibly, it was to escape the strife on that subject that the nine churches formed the new association in 1829.

By the year 1903 the Tuckasegee had grown so large "that many churches that would love to take the Association, feel themselves unable to support the large crowds that attend."<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, it was recommended that the Association split, one district retaining the name Tuckasegee, and the other, composed of churches in Macon County, forming the Macon. This plan was carried out in 1904. In the Minutes for that year, the Historian's Report contains the following statement:

The Tuckasegee is the second oldest in Western North Carolina, and was once the largest Association in the western part of our State, both as to territory and number. Its territory extended from Madison county on the north-east, to Rabun county, Ga., on the south-west. It included part of Madison, all of Jackson, Haywood, Macon and part of Swain counties, N. C., and part of Rabun county, Ga. Now its territory is confined to Jackson county alone.

The next association to be organized in the territory of the original French Broad Association was the Salem, organized in 1838. Rev. A. I. Justice gives the following account of it:<sup>14</sup>

. . . The Salem Association dates from 1838. It was organized at Blake's Meeting House, now Salem Church. The territory covered by the Salem was South Buncombe and Henderson Counties. Henderson, at that time, included all the territory of the State south of Buncombe. Nine churches had been dismissed from the French Broad for the purpose of going into the new organization,

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<sup>13</sup> *Minutes of Tuckasegee Association*, 1903, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 17.

namely; Cane Creek, New Bethany, Crab Creek, Beulah, Ebenezer, French Broad, Mills River, Mt. Pleasant and Mud Creek.

Its ministers were Thomas Stradley, James Blythe, Bailey Bruce, Merritt Rickman, William Mince, R. Jordan, J. Cantrell, Jonathan King, and J. Evans. This Association, for many years, was the strongest and most aggressive of any in the west. It contained the churches of Asheville, Hendersonville and Brevard, together with nearly all of the most prominent country churches in the territory.

Ammons' account of the Salem Association is:<sup>15</sup>

. . . The next Association to be organized was the Salem, which was formed of churches in South Buncombe, and named for one of the oldest churches, known as Old Salem. This body increased till it became very strong. During its day it embraced in its membership James Blythe, N. P. Corn, William Mintz, J. C. Owen, Joseph Blythe, J. H. Duckworth, Thos. Stradley, W. C. Berry and N. Bowen.

James Blythe was an able minister; a little in advance of most of his brethren in point of culture. His labors were principally confined to South Buncombe, and what is now Henderson and Transylvania counties. Few men ever had greater power over men; naturally impulsive, and being filled with the Holy Spirit, he preached as with the Holy Ghost sent down from God. In doctrine and spirit he impressed himself upon his people and his age, so that he had more to do in forming the character of the people, in the sphere of his labors, than any other person. He believed that Christ gave himself a Savior for all, to be testified in due time; hence he mightily pleaded with men to be reconciled to God. Many souls were added unto the Lord through his labors. Other leading spirits in this body were Thos. Stradley and N. Bowen: Stradley was an Englishman, and belonged to the Gill School of Theology. His views and his persistent advocacy of them gave rise to controversy in this body which for a number of years operated as a disturbing element.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Outlines of History of French Broad Association and Mars Hill College*, p. 8f.

<sup>16</sup> In connection with the Salem Association the name of Rev. Thomas Stradley begins to appear in the Baptist history of North Carolina. It was he who led in the organization of the first Baptist church in Asheville and began the Baptist development there which has become so great as to seem wonderful in our eyes—one of the greatest in any section of North Carolina. On this account it is thought well to introduce here "A Sketch of the Life and Labors of Elder Thomas Stradley," by J. A. Stradley, printed in the *Wake Forest Student*, XXVI, at page 38, September, 1906, and to give further information about Stradley and the Baptist development in Ashe-

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In the early years of the Salem Association Elder James Blythe was pastor of one of its churches, Little River, in Transylvania County, which with 286 members in 1952 was the second largest church in the Transylvania Association.

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ville as is found in a "History of the First Baptist Church," written by Miss Wallace Tucker, a member, for a celebration, January 5-7, 1951.

### A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND LABORS OF ELDER THOMAS STRADLEY

The subject of this sketch was born in London, England, about one hundred and six years ago (1800). At the age of fourteen he was put in the King's works, in London, to learn the blacksmiths' trade. As the rule required, he served seven years as an apprentice. He learned the trade to perfection. He inherited an estate of several thousand dollars, but took to drink and squandered it all.

He married Miss Mary Frances Ciblin, an excellent Christian young woman, who was largely instrumental in reforming his life and leading him to become a Christian. He gave up drink, and through the whole of his long life he never tasted another drop of liquor, not even as a medicine. He made a public profession of faith and united with a Baptist church.

With his wife and several small children he came to America, landing at Charleston, S. C. Here he hired a wagon to carry his family and what little goods he had, and wended his way through the country to the then little village of Asheville, in Buncombe Co., N. C. Here he purchased a lot near where the Battery Park Hotel now stands and erected a small dwelling house and a blacksmith's shop. His superior workmanship gained him a large patronage.

Looking out over the vast destitution of that mountain country he longed to carry to the people the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord called him and put him into the gospel ministry. He went out on Sabbaths, and often on week days, preaching day and night, in private homes, or wherever there was room for the people to congregate. He traveled and preached all over Western North Carolina. Elders Humphrey Posey and Thomas Stradley were the pioneer Baptist preachers of that mountain country.

Elder Stradley was a strong Bible preacher. His education was limited, but he was a close and constant student of the Bible. His theological textbooks were the Bible and the "Comprehensive Commentary." He was a strong preacher of salvation by grace.

Perhaps no one man in North Carolina did so much as he did to turn back the destructive tide of intemperance, and to lay a solid foundation for temperance reform, as he did.

After some years of residence in Asheville he sold out and bought the Governor Swain plantation, five miles from town. He knew nothing about farming, but he wanted to raise his children on a farm. His boys soon learned to farm, and made an humble support for their father and family, while the father spent nearly all his time traveling and preaching, not getting on an average more than \$50 or \$75 a year for preaching. Eternity alone will reveal the vast amount of good he did.

There being no railroads at that time in the western part of the State he came over three hundred miles on horseback to attend some of the meetings connected with the organization of the N. C. Baptist State Convention.

He was charter member of the Board of Trustees of the (Wake Forest) College. He was a loyal, devoted friend of all our Baptist institutions.



Though, according to Ammons, Blythe was not a minister of the Big Ivy Association, his preaching was in accord with the repudiation by that body of the Doctrine of Election, and was most powerful in the churches of the Salem

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He was the founder of our Baptist cause in Asheville. He preached for years to a little handful of poor Baptists in a little log house on the hillside, overlooking French Broad River, now known as West Asheville. It was then covered with original growth of timber.

After many years Asheville began to grow, and some Baptist families moved in. A larger and better located house of worship was needed. In spite of poverty, and difficulties that would have paralyzed a man of less faith in God, he undertook to build. He built an \$8,000 house, paying what he could himself and collecting what little he could from others. The contractor finished the house and demanded the remainder of his pay. Elder Stradley could not pay it. The contractor locked the doors and advertised the house for sale. Elder Stradley, in order to save the house, mortgaged his house, farm and stock and paid the debt. After a long struggle, going as far as New York and Boston, he secured money to raise the mortgage and save his home. About this time Dr. John Mitchell was called to the pastorate of the growing church in the new building. After some years this building proved too small and was sold, and the site of the present First Church was bought and that magnificent building erected. In this new building is a "Memorial Window" perpetuating the memory of Elder Thomas Stradley, founder of the First Baptist Church of Asheville.

In the ripe old age of ninety-four he passed away in the triumphs of a living faith at his home near Asheville, and was laid to rest in the cemetery of the new Baptist church, near by him, which as his last work he helped to build.

#### EXCERPTS FROM HISTORY OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (Asheville)

In 1829 Swan and Frances Burnett, early settlers in Buncombe, lived on the slope of the hill running south on the west bank of the French Broad River above Smith's Ferry,—in the neighborhood . . . today (of) Beverly Road, West Asheville. On Sunday, February 28, 1829, Thomas Stradley and Elizabeth Gasperson met there and the four of them held a religious service. For three years they met thus on the first Saturday and Sunday of each month and the old record says, "Thomas Stradley led in Divine Worship." Although no church had been organized, Thomas' brother, Peter, and Naomi, his wife, were received by experience and the following month baptized in the French Broad River. By December their number had grown to eleven and with assistance from Isaac Miles of Newfound Baptist Church and Moses Freeman of Bull Creek (there were Baptists in Buncombe prior to 1802) . . . organized into a church which they named Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church. Swan Burnett and Peter Stradley were chosen, and later ordained, deacons.

In August, 1830, the little church was admitted into the French Broad Association and at this meeting Thomas Stradley was ordained to the Ministry. He was immediately called to be the first pastor of the Baptist Church of Asheville, in which capacity he served through trial and vicissitude for a period of forty-five years. . . .

In 1832 when the church members dedicated their new meeting house, the log cabin they had built on borrowed land, little did they dream of the difficulties and hardships that lay ahead. Over a period of thirty years they

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

Association. He had won nearly all members of those churches to share his views. The great success of Blythe aroused the opposition of the few uncompromising Calvinists remaining in the Salem Association, including the able and aggressive Rev. Thomas Stradley, of the Asheville

were to gain only eighteen members. The log cabin proved to be too far "out of town" and they often met in the old Court House or by invitation in the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches. At one such meeting a collection amounting to \$18.25 was taken for the Baptist Mission. By 1830 the largest amount the church had raised was \$8.00 for Wake Forest Institute. In 1850 the land on which the log house stood changed ownership so they sold their little church for \$20.00. It was ten long years before they built and met for worship in the basement story of the new Baptist Church of Asheville, no longer called Mt. Pleasant! Ten more years were to pass before they moved, in May 1871, into the Auditorium and dedicated their second House of Worship,—the little brick church which still stands on the corner of Spruce and Woodfin Streets.

The new church had been undertaken by these twenty-nine people (only seven males) in complete trust and dependence on God. They had no money so the pastor had given his own property as security for the debt. Threatened with foreclosure, he traveled throughout North and South Carolina soliciting funds and in 1858 appealed to the Baptist State Convention for help. He raised enough money to save his property and the church but a large amount remained due on the building. At one time, because of indebtedness, the doors of the church were nailed up by the contractor. In 1871 Thomas Stradley went as far north as Boston where he preached and was, as he later wrote in the minutes, "eloquent enough to raise money to clear the church debt." This latter had reference to the fact that a few years back some dissatisfaction with the old pastor had arisen in the church, "some wanting a more eloquent preacher"! Mr. N. Bowen served as pastor for a time but because he was unable to raise the \$3,000.00 indebtedness on the church, Thomas Stradley was recalled.

It was a wonderful day when the church moved into the Auditorium. A new spirit was kindled in every heart and the Baptists began moving forward in the work of the Lord. By 1874 we find: preaching three times a month; pastor's salary \$25.00 a year; membership of 13 males and 24 females; paid for all purposes during the year \$53.20; the Sunday School collection \$22.60. In September, 1875, Dr. T. H. Pritchard, later President of Wake Forest College, organized the first prayer meeting. In this same month "Father Stradley" resigned from the pastorate and Dr. John Mitchell of Murfreesboro, N. C., was called. The church appealed again to the State Mission Board to help pay the pastor. The following year, Rev. F. M. Jordan held a revival in the church and thirty-three converts were baptized in the French Broad River in the presence of two thousand spectators. This was a turning point in the history of the church.

Four years later, in 1880, Dr. A. C. Dixon was called at a salary of \$600.00. In 1881 it was raised to \$1,000.00. Due to the coming of the railroads, this was a boom period in the history of Asheville. In ten years, from 1880 to 1890, the population increased from 2,600 to 10,235. Under Dr. Dixon's evangelistic preaching the church "became the center of live, spiritual activity and the period was marked by an almost constant revival." During his ministry there were several hundred additions to the church. . . .

Church, whose persistent advocacy of the Calvinism of the Gill School of Theology, according to Ammons, was a disturbing element. This was especially true in the Salem Association. The story of the strife there becomes an essential part of the Baptist history of this section, and makes necessary this further account of it, taken with abridgement from Rev. A. I. Justice's sketch:<sup>17</sup>

The Salem Association had also become involved in the French Broad and Big Ivy trouble. This resulted in its own division and the establishment of the Union Association. The trouble in the Salem came as follows: In 1844 the Salem called a convention for the purpose of agreeing upon terms of correspondence with the Big Ivy Association. At the session of 1845, the Salem and Big Ivy agreed upon an abstract under which the Big Ivy proposed union and correspondence. The Salem, however, having agreed upon the basis of the proposed Union, deferred the action until some of her churches could have time to reconcile a few of their dissatisfied members. . . .

Elder James Blythe, of the Salem Association, was deeply interested in the union of the French Broad and Big Ivy, and also in the friendly correspondence of the Salem and Big Ivy. He was then the pastor of Little River Church in Transylvania County. About the close of the year 1847, or early in 1848, . . . Elder C. W. Phillips, a minister of the Big Ivy Association, visited the Little River Church. The pastor, feeling that all the differences between the associations were virtually settled, invited Elder Phillips to participate with him in administering the Lord's Supper. The breach of order, as he regarded it, very much offended a prominent member of the Little River Church, and resulted in his exclusion from that church. This brother sought redress by asking Elder H. W. Patterson, and others, to assist him. These brethren met at Little River Church on Friday before the regular meeting on Saturday, March 25, 1848, and held certain proceedings in the absence of the church. The committee met again on Saturday, and proceeded to exclude the church, regarding the excluded brother as the real church. The Salem Association met with the Crab Creek Church the following August, and was strongly inclined to exclude from its councils these offending brethren. After a heated debate which lasted a whole day, and in which the giants of that time were arrayed against each other in oratorical combat, the association accepted the report of the committee and ruled out the

<sup>17</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 18f.



## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

delegates from the Little River Church. As a result of this action, the delegates of this church and of seven other churches, led by Elder James Blythe, withdrew from the Salem Association. On the day following—August 14th—a preliminary meeting was held at the Baptist Church in Hendersonville, and a call for a convention which met at Boiling Springs Camp Ground, where they organized the Union Association Oct. 31st, 1848.

The Green River Association also became involved in this trouble and as a result three of the churches of that Association were rent asunder. This division was brought about as follows: The Mt. Moriah Church in Henderson County was a member of the Union Association, and Elder Blythe was its Pastor. Elder T. B. Justice, of the Green River Association, was pastor of the Mountain Creek, Round Hill, and Cooper's Gap Churches of the Green River. Elders Justice and Blythe were great friends; consequently Elder Justice was in sympathy with Elder Blythe, and joined him in conducting a Communion Service at Mt. Moriah church.

This action on the part of their pastor brought about friction in the churches named above, and the matter was taken up by the Association.

. . . This trouble culminated in the establishment of another church in the community of each of the churches being served by Pastor Justice. Leading brethren in the Salem, Green River, and Union Associations were anxious to have their differences settled, and to see a union effected; but owing to the bitter feeling that existed, it was hard to agree on terms that were satisfactory to all. A proposition was made by the Green River Association to refer the whole matter to a committee to be selected from the Tiger River and Broad River Associations, with the understanding that all would agree to abide by the recommendation of said committee. This was agreed to by all, and a strong and able committee was selected. The Committee was composed of John G. Landrum, chairman; Richard Furman, secretary; Drury Scruggs, Wade Hill, M. C. Barnett and William Walker. The committee met at Hendersonville April 4, 1857, and after hearing all the charges and complaints, recommended that the 14th article of the Constitution of the Union Association, which repudiated the doctrine of election, be expunged, that the Union and Salem Associations be united, and that the churches that had rent off in the Green River go back to the churches from which they had separated. This advice was carried out, and thus ended the strife that had existed for a generation.

Since that time the Doctrine of Election has been much more often discussed by field hands than by preachers in



the churches. Justice closes his account by saying, "Elders Justice and Blythe were leaders in propagating and inculcating the cause and spirit of missions among the churches with which they were connected."

In 1863 the Transylvania Association was organized at Little River Church of churches in Henderson and Transylvania counties which had come out of the Salem Association, and were probably the greater number of those which had belonged to the Union Association. On October 19, 1877, the Carolina Association was organized at Double Springs Church in Henderson County. The organization included among others six churches taken from the Transylvania Association and located in the Green River section of Henderson County.

In 1882, in accord with a resolution of the Western Baptist Convention of 1881, county associations were established in the counties of Buncombe, Henderson and Transylvania. This entailed some associational regrouping of churches and changes of name in some associations. The Transylvania Association became the Transylvania County Association. The Buncombe County Association does not include the churches of the New Found Association. The Henderson County Association was organized at Old Salem Church, October 19, 1882, with eleven churches, causing the dissolution of the Salem Association which took place at old Hominy Church in Buncombe County. The new association was small but active in the same territory covered by the Carolina Association. Consequently, after about four years, the Henderson County Association dissolved and its churches united with the Carolina Association. By the merging of these two associations (with the name Carolina) the resulting body became a strong organization, both in number of churches and in membership. In 1952 it had 60 churches with 11,773 members.

Because of the close connection between the associations

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

we have been considering and the Western Baptist Convention, the history of the associations is not complete without a word about the Convention. Again, we are indebted to Justice who gives the following account:<sup>18</sup>

When the Baptist State Convention was organized, the western part of the state was completely isolated, having neither railroads nor highways, and almost no means of communication. In 1844 the State Convention appointed a delegation of nine to meet with certain brethren of the west to confer with them about the best means of co-operating with the State Convention. . . . The result of this conference was the organization of the Western Baptist Convention, auxiliary to the State Convention. This organization was perfected in 1845 at Boiling Springs Camp Ground near Hendersonville. In 1857, at Berea Church in Buncombe County, it resolved itself into an independent body. . . . As evidence that . . . the prime object of the Convention was to foster the cause of missions, I give the second article of the Constitution of that body which reads as follows: "The primary object of the convention shall be the distribution of the Bible among the destitute, the employment of Home Missionaries within her bounds; the sustaining of foreign, domestic and Indian Missions; also to educate poor young men called of God to the Ministry of the Gospel, who may be approved by their churches." . . .

About 1894, the Mitchell County, Yancey County, and French Broad Associations withdrew from the Western Convention, and united with the State Convention. This left the western convention with only nine Associations, and some of these were very weak. In 1897 A. I. Justice . . . found that the Carolina brethren had decided to withdraw from the western convention that year and unite with the State Convention. He pleaded with the Association not to withdraw that year, but to propose to the convention to dissolve and all go to the State Convention in a body. Upon that suggestion the following resolution was passed by the Association: "Resolved that this Association recommend the dissolution of the Western North Carolina Convention and a consolidation with the State Convention." . . . The overture was presented to the convention which, after due deliberation, was submitted to the Associations to be voted on at their next session. The request was also made that no other association withdraw from the Convention until all the associations were heard from, and that if the report from the annual associations showed that a majority of them desired to unite with the State convention, the convention would dissolve and go

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<sup>18</sup> *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association*, 1924, p. 20f.

in a body. The next meeting of the Western Convention was held in Hendersonville in 1898. It was learned that a large majority in most of the associations had voted for dissolution with a view to co-operating again with the State Convention. While some of the brethren who had labored long and hard for the Western Convention, and whose attachments to it were strong, expressed deep regret and mortification at the action, the convention voted overwhelmingly to dissolve, and after a three days session the Western Baptist Convention adjourned sine die, without even having published the minutes of its closing session. Thus it will be seen that the Western N. C. Baptist Convention, after an existence of fifty-three years, closed its eventful life within two miles of where it was organized.

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## XXIX

### MINUTES

One of the most striking and distinguished features of Baptist associations was the publication of the minutes of their annual sessions. Seemingly in America this began on the organization of their oldest association, the Philadelphia, in 1707, and was continued in the second oldest, the Charleston, organized in 1751. Of the Sandy Creek, the third oldest American association, organized in 1758, we have no minutes of its annual meetings until 1805, when they were first printed. For the next oldest North Carolina association, the Kehukee, organized November 6, 1769, it was provided that: "A full record of the proceedings to be kept and a copy of the minutes together with a Circular Letter and information gathered from the letters (from the churches) as to the state of the churches was to be sent to every church."<sup>1</sup> Just what method was followed in copying and sending the minutes in these early years is not told, but in 1790 the printing of the minutes was begun by the Kehukee, which since that time has been regularly continued, though with some omissions, both in the Kehukee and other associations.

These printed minutes have had an important place in Baptist history and have contributed much to Baptist progress. It must be remembered that during the first quarter of the nineteenth century many families in North Carolina

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 420.



had not a page of printed matter in their homes. A few had a Bible; except for the minutes of the Baptist associations there was no religious periodical of any description published in the state until 1823, when a small paper, the *Roanoke Religious Correspondent*, with a small circulation began publication at Milton, North Carolina, and continued for a few numbers. The first Baptist periodical was the *North Carolina Baptist Interpreter*, an octavo pamphlet of twenty-four pages, edited by Thomas Meredith, a monthly of which publication was begun at Edenton, in the spring of 1833; it was succeeded by the *Biblical Recorder*, issued weekly, the first number of which appeared in January, 1835, also edited by Meredith, published first in New Bern, but since 1837, with suspensions for brief periods, at Raleigh. Both before the War (1861-1865) and since, other Baptist papers have been published for longer or shorter periods in North Carolina, of which by far the most important was the *North Carolina Baptist*, of which publication began in 1891 at Fayetteville, and continued 17 years, until 1907 when it was merged with the *Biblical Recorder*. In a footnote is found Rev. A. I. Justice's account of "Periodicals" in the *Minutes of the Carolina Baptist Association for 1924*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> P. 24f.: "It was realized by the leaders in the early days that, if their program of advancement was to be carried out, they must have a medium of communication; consequently, in 1853, Elder James Blythe began the publication of 'The Carolina Baptist.' It was hard to make a paper live in those days, and after a few years it was suspended for a short while; but the publication was soon resumed with the assistance of Rev. N. Bowen to aid Elder Blythe.

"The publication of 'The Carolina Baptist' was again suspended, and in 1859 'The Baptist Telescope' took its place, with Prof. W. A. G. Brown as editor. Rev. N. Bowen began the publication of 'The Cottage Visitor' in 1867. After 'The Cottage Visitor,' Bro. D. B. Nelson began the publication of 'The Blue Ridge Baptist,' and was succeeded as editor by Mr. T. J. Rickman. The publication of this paper was also suspended after a few years, and Rev. Joseph E. Carter began the publication of 'The Western N. C. Baptist.' All these papers up to this time, had been published at Hendersonville. Succeeding Bro. Carter, Mr. J. D. Boone, who was in the Newspaper business at Waynesville, took over 'The Western N. C. Baptist,' and continued its publication at Waynesville. About 1892 Rev. M. P. Matheny came to Asheville with the purpose of establishing a new paper,

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But it was otherwise with the minutes of the associations. On its organization in the year 1800, the Broad River Association provided for the printing of the minutes of their annual sessions, and their distribution to the churches, as thereafter was the general practice in Baptist associations. As was the general plan, the cost was provided from a Minute Fund, which consisted of a dollar, or two dollars, brought up to the annual sessions by the delegates of each of the churches, and supplemented by collections made at the meetings. The printing and distribution were usually cared for by the clerk, who was expected to be prompt and expeditious since the members of the churches, having paid for the minutes in advance, expected to receive them without any great delay. They were not sent by mail, but the quota for each church, probably a copy for each family represented in its membership, each quota in a separate batch, was delivered to the minister or other delegate, or left at some public place where they might be easily obtained; then they were carried to the church and distributed at the next meeting, a custom which continues to this day. Either at this meeting or later they were read and discussed, so that all members, both those who could read and those who could not, and others interested, might be informed of the progress of the association. A greater number of copies of the minutes was published than was distributed to the churches. In some associations as many as seventy-five of these were retained for exchange with other associations, five or ten or more copies being sent each year by their messengers to those associations with which they were in correspondence, and in due time they received exchange

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calling it 'The Southern Baptist.' Editor Boone felt that it would be unwise to attempt to run two papers, in this small territory, so he sold 'The Western N. C. Baptist' to Mr. Matheny who continued its publication at Asheville for about two years, when Mr. Boone took back the old subscription list to 'The Western N. C. Baptist,' and continued its publication at Waynesville until the dissolution of 'The Western Baptist Convention'."

copies of their minutes. In this way the ministers and other leaders in one association were able not only to keep informed, but also to inform the churches they served of any progress being made by the Baptists of other associations. Doubtless such exchange did much to promote the unity and harmony of the various associations and embolden their churches to adopt any new methods or lines of work that had been found good.

Just as in those early days the minutes of one Baptist association proved interesting and valuable to their brethren of other associations, the minutes of all the associations have progressively increased in interest and value, since it is now recognized that they are an authentic source of Baptist history, and in our several states provision is made for their collection and preservation. They are invaluable for the years before the Baptists had other printed publications. Before the Civil War the American Baptist Historical Society was seeking minutes of North Carolina associations for their great library, now at Crozer Theological Seminary. The Wake Forest College Library has for many years been building up its collection of minutes, especially those of North Carolina associations, for its great Baptist Collection, which now contains complete files of minutes of many associations, several of them more than a century old. Of these there are more than one hundred bound volumes, the rarer being kept in steel cabinets, with leaves treated to insure preservation. They are often consulted by church historians and others. For the general historian as well as for writers of church history the minutes of these associations in the early years are of much value, since from them one may learn much of the daily life of the people, their moral, their religious, social, political, economical, and educational interests, problems and progress.

In the exchange of minutes spoken of above, the more progressive associations exercised a healthful influence on

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the less progressive, but this was checked after the Division of 1827 in the associations that came under the dominance and control of the anti-missionary and Hardshell elements. After a few years these broke off correspondence with the progressive associations and no longer exchanged minutes with them. Though the Primitive Baptists continued to publish annual minutes, they reduced their contents to accord with their narrow religious interests. Dr. Samuel Wait said with reference to them: "These minutes were generally found on four pages of small size, giving only the most common statistics, such as had occurred the previous year." Wait was writing of conditions as he found them about the year 1830. The minutes of those associations now called Primitive Baptists have continued to this day much as he described them, while those of the more progressive associations have from the beginning been much more comprehensive. In them are found well ordered records of the proceedings of the annual meetings, including some account of visitors and their messages, sketches, resolutions, statement of queries and the answers given, reports of committees, accounts of written communications from outside sources and the discussions aroused by them and the answers approved. In them were also published the annual circular letters of which account will be given in a later chapter. In many of the associations the minutes became a kind of annual periodical, the only periodical, religious or secular, that came to many Baptist homes of North Carolina for nearly a century after the publication of minutes was begun with the Kehukee Association in 1790. Probably in every year of that period the total number of such minutes going to Baptist homes far exceeded the total number of all other periodicals except almanacs and newspapers that were read in North Carolina. They were the medium of communication between the associations and the members of the churches who accepted as authoritative what they



found in them. Faithfully recording the proceedings of the associations, these minutes contained much of general interest, the well-considered opinions, views and decisions of the ablest of the Baptists on any of the great variety of subjects which had been brought to the attention of the association in reports of committees, resolutions and motions, and in queries and circular letters. Often in these minutes may be found contributions to the political history. An instance is this:

In 1835 several associations considered a resolution of both religious and political interest with reference to Abolitionist propaganda, of which Logan gives the following account:<sup>3</sup>

After the usual routine of associational business was transacted, the following preamble and resolutions were introduced and discussed at some length and unanimously adopted by the body, viz:

"WHEREAS, the Abolitionists in the Northern States have circulated certain *incendiary pamphlets*, prejudicial to the interests of the South, and the same are calculated to create much disturbance in our christian community, inasmuch as such productions have been sent to ministers and private members of churches, contrary to their wishes and without their consent; and whereas, ministers of the Gospel are liable, in this way, to have their usefulness much diminished in a community whose feelings are hostile to such sentiments. Therefore

*Resolved*, That this Association disclaim all communion with those engaged in sending abroad productions so corrupt and poisonous, and that we will in future look with indignation and contempt upon any such efforts as are calculated to disturb the best interests and peace of our country, and we recommend the same course to our churches and sister associations."

A year later an identical resolution was passed by the Catawba Association.

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<sup>3</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 53.

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## XXX

### QUERIES

The nature of associations being such as that indicated above, that is, Advisory Councils, the subjects on which they were most often asked to give advice were those brought before them in queries from the churches or individuals. Accordingly, an account of these queries is an important part of the histories of our Baptist associations in their earlier years. This becomes more obvious on the consideration that in those days there was no Baptist State Convention with its numerous boards and agencies and institutions to make reports and suggest courses of action to the associations. But the churches had problems of their own; their members often had different views on important doctrines and the ordinances of the churches, on the qualifications of pastors and deacons and the manner of selecting them, on relations with Christians of other denominations, on alien immersion, and they needed instruction on many moral and social questions—marriage and divorce, selling slaves, dealing with adulterers and those guilty of other gross sins and many other questions of less import. It often happened that their ministers could not resolve their difficulties; as already indicated they had no books except that rarely there was a Bible in the home, but very rarely any other book or a printed page of any kind—no religious paper, no tract, no Sunday school literature, none of the periodicals now put out by our numerous Baptist boards

and institutions, no volumes of sermons or other books with discussions, simple or learned, of matters of possible concern to Baptists. It was only in the sessions of their associations that the Baptists of the day could hear discussions, pro and con, of the questions in which they were interested and get well-considered advice and instruction. Already in my chapter on the "Kehukee Association 1777-1805," Volume I, pp. 511ff., and of the Yadkin Association above, I have given some account of the use of queries in those associations. I am here making this further statement which applies not only to the Broad River Association, but to the other early Baptist associations, for many of the same queries were brought to all.

In all the associations the discussion of these queries had some general values. Doubtless they added greatly to the interest in the meetings and increased the attendance. Here not only those who presented the queries but many others who had talked of them around the firesides, sometimes in heated debate, might hear the pros and cons of the questions involved clearly stated by the ablest and most trusted of the ministers, often with the general result that those who heard were better able to give a reason for the faith that was within them. Another general result was that the discussions gave a better understanding of Baptist doctrines and principles and church government and morals, and thus brought a greater unity in the churches of the association and tended to discourage those who troubled their brethren with ridiculous contentions and wrangles over inconsequential matters.

Historically these queries are of importance since they reveal the interests and condition of the churches in their progress through the years. In all associations they were freely used as they were needed. This need continued, but after about 1840 began to grow less in all, and fewer queries were sent up from the churches and often before the opening

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of the Civil War there were periods of several years in which an association was not asked to consider one. Some queries have been answered by the course of events. Such, for instance, are the questions asking for instruction concerning slaves, providing for their religious instruction, their marriage, selling and buying for gain, the right to own them, etc. In the post-bellum period interest in subjects previously discussed as queries in the association continued but their discussion was provided for in the programs of the Union, or Fifth Sunday, meetings which during this period were general in the Baptist associations, and were the forum for the discussion of topics of interest. Following an announced program these discussions were often most interesting and instructive and often were largely attended. Here one might hear in the course of a year the pros and cons of many matters of historical or current concern to Baptists, and even ministers might be advised how to improve the work of their churches by some laymen who had been given a place on the program and sometimes provoked spirited replies to his criticisms.

In considering the queries brought before the Broad River Association it is necessary to recall that at its organization many of its churches were in pioneer territory, often, says the historian, thirty or forty miles from one another.<sup>1</sup> The first query brought before the Association at its meeting at Green's Creek Church, Rutherford (now Polk) County, N. C., in 1801, the first after its organization, was "Can we hold a member in fellowship who has been convicted by the civil laws and received corporal punishment upon his denying the charge? Answer: We cannot." It is well to recall that until after 1868 the whipping-post provided the punishment for many crimes in North Carolina. The answer is interesting because it seems to be based on the

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<sup>1</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 245.



church rule of determining one's right to retain his church membership by reference to his court record; his right to membership not being questioned so long as he was not convicted of crime in the courts. In the last half century many serving terms in the state penitentiaries continue as members of churches, even Baptist churches.

A second query in the session of 1801 was: "Does the word of God give any toleration to men to put away their wives for any cause and marry others?" This question of divorce and marriage relations in some of its aspects was often before the associations in these early years, and seemed difficult to answer. When first proposed in 1801 the answer was not given, but postponed until 1802, when it was again postponed, no answer being agreed upon, the query was referred to Elder Joseph Camp who in 1804 discussed the whole matter in a circular letter. "This theme," says Logan,<sup>2</sup> "occupying the attention of the body so much, and the apparent difficulty to get a proper solution of the matter by the body, induces us to suppose that there was at that time a great laxity in reference to the strict observance of the matrimonial relations. We have learned from elderly persons that such was the case, and that society at that day and time was not very refined in many things."

A further indication of confusion in these matters is seen in the query in 1805: "Does the Association hold with polygamy?" For the past fifteen years, as told in our chapter on "Discipline" in the churches of the Yadkin Association, bigamy had been a crime in North Carolina, but the query indicates that it was still prevalent in some parts of the Broad River Association. The Association expressed strong disapproval of polygamy, and disapproval of it is indicated in the answer to the 1811 query, "Is it right for any member of our churches to solemnize the rites

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<sup>2</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 18.

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of matrimony between parties when either of them have a living husband or wife?" Here the reference is probably to bigamous marriages, and only less probably to a Baptist justice of the peace who was ignorant or disregarding of the law. In 1806 the Association considered the query, "Is it expedient to retain in fellowship persons of color, though free, who shall intermarry with the whites?" In accord with the laws of North Carolina which made such marriages illegal, the answer was "No." In 1820 the Association, meeting at Mountain Creek in Rutherford (now Polk) County, answered to queries regarding marriage relations. One of these was: "How shall a church proceed with a member in slavery whose companion was taken away out of the country and sold, and the member left has married another?" The answer was: "Agreeably to the Scriptures, the church could not hold such a one in fellowship." The wording indicated that this answer was not arrived at without difficulty and hesitation and left the church with some liberty. It is obvious from the above that in the churches of the Association those of their members who were slaves living together as man and wife were considered as validly married, and in that relation subject to the discipline of the church, even though the civil laws made no provision for such marriages. But it is not clear just in what the Broad River Association thought the validity of these marriages consisted; probably, however, the following taken from Purefoy's *History of the Sandy Creek Association*<sup>3</sup> would have been acceptable to all the Baptist churches and associations of the Carolinas at that time:

Elder Daniel Gould (of Pee Dee Church, Anson County, N. C.) presented the following query: "What is a valid marriage among the black people?"

Answer: "When they come together in their former and general custom, having no (other) companion."

Owners of slaves should use all reasonable and lawful means to

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<sup>3</sup> P. 83f.

prevent them from being separated. To effect this they should put themselves to some inconvenience, in buying, selling and exchanging to keep them together. Both moral obligation and humanity demand it.

The second query, somewhat similar to the first, was: "Is it agreeable to the Scripture to receive a woman into fellowship that was married to an emigrant from Europe who, after a few months, separated from her and embarked for his native country, she remaining for several years destitute married to another man?" The answer was "No." Unlike the query regarding the "member in slavery," this query was one which might be duplicated today, except that in our day the woman would probably be freed for a second marriage by appeal to a court. Though in some instances the Association may seem to be severe in its answers to queries on marital relations, it must be remembered that these were pioneer days and the churches could make no compromise with immorality in any guise. It was this strong stand of the churches and the Association that effectually corrected "the great laxity in matrimonial relations" of which Logan speaks. Probably conditions were not worse in the area of the Broad River Association than in other pioneer regions.

Another query, "Does the word of God tolerate a brother to marry his wife's sister's daughter after the decease of his wife?" for which an answer was asked of the association in 1803, was answered that though the Bible did not forbid such marriages, yet for prudential reasons they should not be encouraged. The principle involved did not differ from that of the regulations of the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church of America which forbid a man to marry his deceased wife's sister. Other instances of improper marital relations are noticed in the footnotes.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In 1832 the Association was asked to advise on the reception as a member under these circumstances. "A man marries a woman, twenty years since, and from peculiar reasons lives with her but a very short time, when

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Early in the century the Broad River Association and several others were asked to advise about marriages on Sunday and with seeming reluctance admitted that nothing was said about such marriages in the New Testament. In 1809 the Association was asked what should be done when a wife had satisfied the church of her fitness for membership but her husband would not consent to her baptism. The answer, showing much wisdom, was: "We recommend that such person wait patiently, hoping that God in his providence may make a way for her to come into the church by the husband's consent." No statement of the result has been recorded.<sup>5</sup>

Another group of queries indicate that in the earlier years the churches often desired instruction on such matters as the organization of churches, the qualification and duties of ministers and deacons, baptism and the Lord's Supper. In 1812, after taking a year to consider, in answer to the query: "What is a Church?" the Association gave this definition: "We believe a Gospel church consists of an indefinite number of saints joined together by consent, yet we think not complete without a minister." This left uncertain whether a church without a Gospel minister has the power to admit candidates for baptism, as some churches seem to have been doing. This query, submitted in 1811, was

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he removes to another state, leaves his wife behind, marries another, lives with her eighteen years, rearing a large family. The man and his second wife makes professions of religion, and his first wife seemingly being dead, either he or his wife ask to be admitted to the church. What should the church do?" The Association was puzzled, and after a year could give only a provisional answer.

In 1839 the Green River Church submitted this query: "What shall be done when a married member makes application to the church for a letter of dismission, who has left his family and wishes to remove to a distant country, and who says that his companion (seemingly a second wife) is so disagreeable that he cannot live with her, and that he does not expect to live with her any longer?" Again, the Association was puzzled and gave a hypothetical answer.

<sup>5</sup>In Vol. I of this work, at p. 485 f., is an account of the trouble caused by the baptism of a Mrs. Dawson whose husband shot and almost killed in June, 1777, Elder John Tanner, a visiting minister at Cashie Church.



not directly answered but the next year it was declared "right according to the word of God, to constitute churches where there is no minister belonging to the members proposed to be constituted," and in 1851 it was said to be "right, but not desirable, for a church to open its doors for the reception of members in the absence of its pastor."

But what are the proper officers of a church, how many, and what are their functions? In 1809 the query was: "Is it agreeable to Scripture that there should be any more elders in a church besides the pastor, or minister, and deacon?" In order that "a Scriptural answer might be arrived at," the answer was postponed until the next session, "and the churches advised to give the matter the strictest attention." The answer the next year was: "There are but two officers—ministers, or elders, and deacons." From this time this was the accepted doctrine of the Association, but it was not until 1813, after the discussion of three queries relating to the subject that it was well established that the ministers did not consist of two orders, (1) ordained ministers and (2) exhorters. In answer to the three queries it was said (1) that "the Scriptures do mention the gifts of doctrine and exhortation as separate"; (2) that "when God in his wisdom, has thought proper to bestow these gifts separately, they ought to be separately used in the churches," and (3) that "those who profess the gift of exhortation only are not qualified to exercise the ministerial function fully." In answer to another query at the same session it was declared that the laying on of hands on lay members was an "ordinance of the Gospel," and that the proper administrators were "ministers of the Gospel only." At all periods of North Carolina Baptist history those known as exhorters have been found in Baptist churches. As the name indicates their function was to exhort sinners to repentance, chiefly at protracted meetings; they were ardent Christians, and in their daily lives pure and of moral force in their communi-

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ties. Often they were able public speakers. Because of their sincerity and zeal and their known moral influence sometimes their exhortations were more effective than the sermons of the ministers. Often an able young man whose educational advantages had been superior began to exhort from the time of his conversion, and had the encouragement of his church in doing so. Not a few of the ablest Baptist preachers began in this way.<sup>6</sup>

There were other queries concerning ministers. The Association in 1811 said that they had not been able to find any precedent in the Scriptures to justify ministers of the Gospel in holding public offices such as justice of peace, and therefore recommended "that ministers decline the exercise of such appointments." In 1813, the Association advised that a church which had an ordained minister of its own should exercise great caution in calling another. Seemingly the church from which this query came was tiring of its pastor, and so was another church, which had an ordained minister and in 1816 was asking whether it was in good order to dissolve, and if so, how to go about it. The Association could cite no Scripture, but advised that the church call helps from other churches. In 1804 a church was told that it had no right to refuse a letter of dismission to a minister, one of its members, who lived in the bounds of another church.

In the early days the churches often asked for instruction

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<sup>6</sup> One of these was the distinguished Dr. William T. Brantly, from a sketch of whom by his son, Dr. William Brantly, found in Purefoy's *History of the Sandy Creek Association*, p. 305, the following is taken:

"After his conversion, Dr. Brantly seemed to have no other thought or desire but that of devoting his life to the service of God. A profession of religion had hardly been made, before, with a zeal which some might deem indiscreet, but which in him was irrepressible, he commenced, publicly and privately, wherever a hearing could be secured, exhorting sinners to repentance. At this period, in the exuberance of his youthful zeal, when excited by the presence of a congregation, he would become so anxious to do good, that he has been frequently known to rise, after the regular services were concluded, and ask permission to exhort the people farther. This he did in most affecting manner. More than one sinner has dated his convictions to the appeals made by 'that boy who spoke after the minister had done'."

about deacons. In 1807 the circular letter, by Rev. Ambrose Carlton, was on the *Duties of Deacons*, "an able and judicious production."<sup>7</sup> In 1830 the subject of the circular letter prepared by Elder Berryman Hicks was "The qualifications and office-work of a Deacon," and in 1835 Drury Dobbins, closely associated with Hicks, wrote on "The duty of a church in the choice of a Deacon." However, the churches wanted more particular information than they found in the circular letters, and it was given in answers to their queries. In 1805 they were told that "a deacon's official duties apply to everything in the shape of discipline in the house of God, except the administration of the ordinances"; and in the same year that "a deacon may forfeit his office to serve in the house of God by a disorderly walk"; in 1815, the view was expressed that "a church should be exceedingly cautious how she dismisses a deacon from office," and that it was "not good order to dismiss one at his own request," unless he was not filling his office properly; in 1819, it was advised that a church has a right to ordain a deacon provided two or more ordained ministers were present, and that in such a case a deacon might assist in the ordination; in 1844, a query from Providence Church, at which the Association was meeting, was: "Is it consistent with the Scriptures to ordain a man to the sacred office of deacon, who carries on a distillery?" After some discussion a motion to lay the question on the table prevailed.<sup>8</sup>

Another group of queries concerned members of extinct churches. In 1808 a church was advised that it would be in order to admit to membership former members of an extinct or dissolved church on letters of dismission granted by a presbytery from other churches. The next year it was recommended that excommunicated members from an extinct

<sup>7</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> "We are sorry," says Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 63, "to see a matter of such importance so summarily disposed of."

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church should make application to the nearest church for restoration. Like queries were considered in 1818, and 1828.

As in the Sandy Creek, the Yadkin, the Kehukee, and the Charleston associations, the churches, in answer to queries, were advised that they had no right to hold in membership members "who belong to and frequent Masonic lodges." However, the Cedar Creek Church continued to hold in its membership William Lancaster, "who had been the Clerk of the Association from the time of its organization up to the present session, and, withal, was a very good and useful man."<sup>9</sup> Elder M. C. Barnett, the first historian of the Broad River Association quoted approvingly by Logan,<sup>10</sup> says with reference to the decision of the Association on Masons: "This was one of those officious meddlings of Associations in subjects that do not belong to them, and which, let the decision be any way it will, is impracticable to be carried out."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Of Lancaster Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 27, says further: "He had been their clerk for eleven years, and not a word was said about the matter until now this query, as a firebrand is brought before the body to evolve a vote of censure against him, which, of course, was so considered by him, for notwithstanding he continued fully in the confidence of his church, and was for many years thereafter (until the session of 1823) a representative of Cedar Springs Church, yet he never served again as clerk of the body."

<sup>10</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 27.

<sup>11</sup> Purefoy, *History of the Sandy Creek Association*, pp. 135 ff., says that the question first came before that association in 1826, on a query reading: "Is it consistent with the spirit of the Gospel to fellowship those who may unite with those called Free-Masons, and frequent their lodges or not? Or shall we correspond with any association that is favorable to such proceedings?" The query was laid over till next session, on the motion of William L. Lightfoot, a messenger from the Raleigh Association. At the session of 1827, the committee to whom the query had been referred brought in this answer: "We, as Baptists, profess to know nothing, correctly about Masonry, therefore we are not prepared to give a definite answer to said query." The Association, however, was not satisfied; the query had been evaded, not answered. Purefoy's further account at page 138 is: "At the next meeting of this body, the church at Fall Creek revived this query in the following words: 'Is it, or is it not, consistent with the gospel for any member of the Baptist church to join themselves to a people who are called Masons, and frequent their lodges?' To which the following answer was given:



Queries regarding the ordinances often came before the Association. For questions on baptism the "System" was clear and definite, and nearly all queries on that subject referred to what is called today alien immersion. The Association consistently gave the decision that it was "not consistent with the Gospel for a Baptist church to receive a person into fellowship who has been immersed by an administrator of a different denomination, and recognize such as valid baptism." In 1834 it was advised that one baptized by a minister in disorder could not be received. Of somewhat similar nature was the advice given in 1845 that Campbellites were not to be admitted to the churches. In 1847 a confusing answer was given to the query: "Are ministers of the Gospel authorized to receive and baptize members when sent to labor in distant parts of the world, where no church members are present?" There is gospel authority for such baptizing, "but it is inexpedient now, as a general rule in a land of churches and church members to practice such a course except in very extreme cases."

As early as 1804 an emphatic "No" was given to the query whether a church should "hold a member in fellowship who communes with Pedobaptists." In 1816 it was declared that baptism must precede communion, even in the case of those received into the membership of Baptist churches

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"*Resolved*, That we do not fellowship the practice of any member in our connection joining with or frequenting Mason lodges."

"At the present time (A. D. 1859), this query would no doubt be answered in such a way as to leave it discretionary with church members to become Masons or not. There are very few church-members now who would make Masonry a test of fellowship. The feelings of those who have prejudices against this time-honored institution should be respected." ("Prejudices" is a rather disrespectful word.)

Miss Townsend's account of Masonry in the Charleston Association is as follows (*South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805*, p. 114): "The question of membership of Baptists in Masonic lodges troubled all the churches after 1791, when the order was incorporated in South Carolina; the Charleston Association answered in 1798 with care and circumspection that the lodges openly professed good objects and had Christian members, but that the vow of secrecy would deter 'serious Christians' from forming the connection; however, persons should be left to their private judgment in this matter."

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but not yet baptized. Doubtless those who made the "Abstract of Principles" thought this was clear in their article 12: "We believe that none but believers have a right to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper." A more explicit statement was now made. Probably under the influence of communion services of the Methodists and Presbyterians at the Great Revival meetings, in 1822 the Association was asked to consider a query reading "Would it not be most agreeable with gospel order to commune or take the Lord's Supper at the associational meetings?" The answer was "We think it best not to adopt such a rule at this time." The query was never repeated. Practically all Southern Baptists are now (1954) strongly convinced that the celebration of the Lord's Supper except as a church ordinance is a perversion of the intent and purpose of the ordinance. Though only baptism and the Lord's Supper are mentioned as ordinances in the "System," in answer to queries in 1810, the Association declared that "the laying on of hands on lay members is an ordinance of the Gospel," and that "the minister of the Gospel is the only proper administrator." Probably the reference was to the laying on of hands often used in those days at baptisms.

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## CIRCULAR LETTERS

Circular Letters is the name given to those letters of the several Baptist associations sent year by year to their constituent churches. They were used by that earliest of Baptist associations of America, the Philadelphia, from the time of its organization in 1707. For a half century or more they had no definite name, nor was the name of the writer given. Until 1763 at the foot of each letter were the names of the elders and messengers of the churches in attendance and sometimes of the moderator and clerk. From 1763 until 1773, the letters were published under the caption, in small capitals, *Pastoral Letter* or *Pastoral Address*, which in 1774 was changed to *Circular Letter*, the name by which they were already generally known.

For the earliest years these letters were little more than copies of the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings, but by degrees they made room for salutations, advice, exhortations, and discussion of doctrines. They had assumed their present definite character by the year 1766, the date of the earliest printed letter. In that year the Philadelphia Association "Ordered that Abel Griffiths do draw up an Association letter to the churches."<sup>1</sup> As it is short, this first printed letter is given here.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, A. D. 1707, to A. D. 1807*, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, A. D. 1707, to A. D. 1807*, p. 98.

# NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

## PASTORAL ADDRESS

The ministers and messengers of the several Baptist churches in Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and provinces adjacent, met in Association at Philadelphia, the 14th, 15th, and 16th of October, A. D. 1766.

To the several churches concerned, wish mercy and peace may be multiplied.

Dear Brethren, through the tender mercy of God, we have been preserved to see the time of our annual meetings, and blessed be his name, we met in love, and preserved harmony and affection through the whole of our proceedings. We were agreeably entertained with a discourse on the Incarnation of the dear Redeemer, by Reverend Isaac Stelle. The discourse met with good acceptance. Much refreshed were we also by reading your letters; by which we find that our churches are generally at peace among themselves; and to our great joy, find the Lord is still giving us new manifestations of his walking in the midst of his golden candlesticks, and blessing the word by making it powerful to bring souls to the obedience of faith, and to enlist under the banner of the King of Zion, so that there have been added to our churches by baptism, since last Association, two hundred and forty-nine. There still remain complaints, from some of our churches, of deadness, which may the Lord remove, to his glory and the joy of his saints. Thirty of our members have been cut off by death, and nine excommunicated.

Now, dear brethren, before we dissolve our Association, suffer a word of exhortation. Oh, endeavor to walk worthy of Christ, and to use all diligence to make your calling and election sure, that the joy thereof may excite in you a holy resignation to the will of God, and a holy resolution to forsake all and follow Christ. Be diligent in closet and family prayer. Be earnest for your households, and the land in general: especially for the welfare of Zion, that the Lord may make her a praise in the earth. O pray for your ministers, that the Lord will make them successful instruments in his hands for the comfort of saints and the conversion of sinners. Strengthen their hands and be willing to spare them at seasons to supply the needs of destitute churches. Encourage men of promising gifts among you. Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together, but value your place in the house of God. Endeavor to maintain gospel order in the churches. Strive against temptations and every lust, that you may keep your garments unspotted with the flesh. Give no occasion to the adversaries to blaspheme. Stir up every spark of grace in your souls to a lively exercise, that you may enjoy the comforts thereof while in the world. And contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. Finally,



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brethren, "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things."

We conclude, with wishing you all grace to support you, and the Spirit of God to direct you safe through this vale of tears, and to bring you at last to the heavenly Canaan.

BENJAMIN MILLER, Moderator.

SAMUEL JONES, Clerk.

Philadelphia, October 16th, 1766.

In 1761 the Association letter was written by the Rev. Peter Peterson Vanhorn. After this, except for the years 1764, 1770, and 1772, the names of the writers of the letters are indicated in the minutes. From 1774 to 1798, a period of about a quarter of a century, the circular letters were written in accord with a plan proposed in 1774 as a result of action at the 1773 meeting asking that a specimen circular letter be prepared. This plan was:<sup>3</sup>

That the contents of the general letter shall consist of observations and improvements of some particular article of faith, contained in our Confession, beginning with the first, and so on in order, unless occasion require the contrary; the manner and improvement, whether explanatory, confirmatory, consolatory, or by questions and answers, to be concluded by the writer. Also, that a brother be nominated beforehand, to prepare against the next meeting.

The first letter prepared on this plan was that of 1774 by Rev. Abel Morgan, and has for its subject the first article of the Confession: "Of the Holy Scriptures"; the last was that of 1798 by Rev. David Jones, A.M., and had for its subject "Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day," which was Chapter XXII of the Confession of Faith. These letters, written by the ablest and most learned Baptists of that period of great scholars and thinkers and well printed in the minutes, constitute probably the best exposition of

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<sup>3</sup> *Minutes of the Philadelphia Baptist Association, A. D. 1707, to A. D. 1807*, p. 136.

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the Articles of the Philadelphia Baptist Confession ever written.

The remaining letters in the minutes of the Philadelphia Association for the years 1799-1807, are in no respect inferior to the earlier letters. Some treat of Baptist doctrines not found in the Confession; others are on contemporary subjects. That of 1806 was written by Rev. William Rogers, one of the ablest Baptists who ever lived, and had the important subject of "Christian Missions." It reveals the interest in missions of an intelligent Baptist in the years before Judson and Rice went to India and became Baptists.

From 1707 to 1751 the Philadelphia was the only Baptist association in America, and the only circular letters were those of that association. The Charleston Association, the second oldest Baptist association in America, was organized in 1751, and probably, following the example of the Philadelphia Association, had circular letters from the beginning, but none of them for the earliest years seem to be extant. Later they were regularly published. That of 1809 on the "Duty of Observing the Christian Sabbath" was made the letter of the Chowan Association in 1817. The third oldest Baptist Association, the Sandy Creek, was organized in 1758; being a Separate Baptist association, it did not follow the Philadelphia and the Charleston Particular Baptist bodies, and had no circular letters until after 1805 when the minutes of the Association were first published, but thereafter regularly provided for them.

The fourth oldest Baptist association in America is the Kehukee, organized on November 6, 1769; in its constitution, adopted at the time of its organization, it was provided that "to all churches of the association should be sent a full record of each annual meeting and also a copy of the circular letter." However, there is no record of these circular letters of the Kehukee Association until after the

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printing of the minutes began in 1789. The account in Burkitt and Read's *History* is: <sup>4</sup>

Ever since the second year after the minutes were first printed, which was in the year 1790, it was customary for the Association to address the churches by way of circular letters. The custom is to appoint some minister, the year before, to prepare one against the next Association. At first it was the practice to name a subject, but of late the minister is at liberty to choose his subject. The letter thus prepared is brought to the Association, and if approved by them, is printed in the minutes.

The *History* is continued only until 1803, before which time it contains account of the circular letters, and in it are printed in full three of these letters, those for 1791, 1794, and 1800, each written by one of the ablest Baptist ministers who ever lived in North Carolina. Of all these letters and their writers some account will be taken below, and from them extracts given.

The writer of the first, that of 1791, was Martin Ross, whose great ability and services, of which some notice has been taken in our first volume,<sup>5</sup> had already brought him, though young, into prominence. It was very fitting that the Kehukee Association appointed him to write the first of its circular letters, and assigned as its subject one dear to his heart, "Maintenance of Gospel Ministers."

The writer of the circular letter of 1794 was Elder William Lancaster, at that time minister of churches near Louisburg in Franklin County. Like his fellow Baptist ministers, Elders Henry Abbott and Lemuel Burkitt, he was distinguished for his services both in church and state. In 1788 and 1789 he was chosen by his fellow citizens to guard their liberties in the conventions of those years on the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The important

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<sup>4</sup>Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association from its Original Rise down to 1803*, p. 160.

<sup>5</sup>See pages 491, 515, 517, 544.

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part he had in those conventions has already been indicated on page 516 of the first volume of this work, to which readers are referred. Like other ministers of the gospel, he was debarred by the State Constitution from holding offices of honor or profit in North Carolina, but thanks to Elder Henry Abbott that same State Constitution had provided religious liberty in North Carolina and ministers of all communions were preaching without let or hindrance. That Elder William Lancaster had been doing this to the satisfaction of the Kehukee Association is indicated by the fact that he was chosen to write the circular letter for the session that on September 27, 1794, met at Sandy Run in Bertie County, Elder Burkitt's church. The subject assigned was "On the Saints' Final Perseverance in the Faith." This and the subject of Elder Nathan Gilbert's circular letter of 1803 and several other assigned subjects had already been the subjects of circular letters of the Philadelphia Association in its long series of letters on the Articles of Faith. While those of the Philadelphia Association are more elaborate and comprehensive and probably more correct theologically, the shorter letters of Elders Lancaster and Gilbert on the same subjects are well adapted to the understanding of the members of the Kehukee Association and no less convincing. The several extracts below are from the letter of 1794.

As a further confirmation of the doctrine contended for, we offer to your consideration the following Scriptures. Psal. xxxvii. 23, 24. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand." Isa. xlii. 16. "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in a path that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Mic. vi. 8. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall I shall arise." 1 John ii. 19. "They went out from us, but they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: But they



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went out that they might be made manifest that they were not of us."

Again, the blessed Jesus hath said, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out;" and further declares "that it was the will of the Father that he should *lose nothing*, but that he should raise it up at the last day." That the water he would give his people (which is the graces of his spirit) should be in them a well of water springing up into everlasting life. That he has given them eternal life, and that they shall never perish: And that they shall not come into condemnation, for they are passed from death unto life. And because I live (says he) ye shall live also. For a proof of which, see John vi. 36-39; iv. 14; x. 28, 29; v. 24. . . .

Let the golden chain of God's decrees, and the believer's privileges, bring up the rear. Rom. viii. 29, 30. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Here believers, is a golden chain indeed, a chain of God's making, and therefore cannot be broken by all the sophistry of men of corrupt minds, who exceedingly err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For here it may be observed, that those of whom it is said that they were *foreknown*, *predestinated*, *called*, and *justified* are identically the same people that are to be *glorified*—this being an undeniable fact, we conclude that the argument drawn from this authority is unanswerable, and therefore must be finally conclusive.

The writer of the circular letter of 1800 was Elder Nathan Gilbert, pastor of the church of Falls of the Tar River (Rocky Mount) with which the Association convened that year. Of Elder Gilbert, Burkitt and Read in 1803 gave the following sketch:

August, 1795, Elder Nathan Gilbert (a respectable character), who was an ordained minister, joined this church by a letter of dismissal from Scuppernong church, who supplied the place of a pastor after the removal of Elder Skinner. In 1798, the church by unanimous vote, requested Elder Gilbert to take charge of the church as pastor, but his mind was not to do it at that time. In 1802, he accepted the call and is now the existing pastor.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Burkitt and Read, *A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association from its Original Rise down to 1803*, p. 232 f.

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The subject of his circular letter was "Good Works," which in addition to being the subject of a letter of the Philadelphia Association, was also the subject of a circular written by Elder Drury Dobbins for the Broad River Association afterward, in the year 1811. Probably most would judge Gilbert's letter the best of the three—worthy of the pastor of the great Baptist, Elisha Battle, who was a member of the Falls of the Tar Church. The following extracts indicate something of the character of the letter:

. . . By good works, we understand works of various kinds as, 1. Our duty to *God*. 2. Our duty to the *Church* and people of God. 3. Our duty to our *neighbors*. 4. Our duty to *magistrates*, or earthly rulers. 5. Our duty to our *family*; and, lastly, to *ourselves*. . . .

Fifthly, our duty to our *family*, which appears very extensive when we consider ourselves, in respect to them, not only as stewards, who have to give account of our stewardship to God, but as it were, as *prophets*, *priests* and *kings*. As a prophet, we should teach and instruct them; as a priest we should *pray* with and for them, and should be careful in the order of their government. Each one to whom God has committed the care of souls, or a family, which is the same thing, should consider himself as their teacher, to whom all the family look, and from whom they all expect to receive their instruction, as it is well known that children in their tender years are naturally led to think the judgment, counsel, ways, and behavior of their parents to be superior to all others, especially when parents or rulers exercise a proper authority. Every family should have one, and only one proper head, who should take the government thereof, and in all cases endeavor to rule with justice, having a particular regard for all about him, setting forth good examples, walking in the ways of godliness and true piety, praying with and for them oft: yea, we are exhorted to "pray without ceasing," and in everything to give thanks. If we neglect public prayer, praise, and thanksgiving in our families, do we not leave them all to walk in the dark, as it were, while we suffer our light to be hidden under the bushel of worldly cares, or under the bed of sloth, while we ourselves walk unworthy the Christian name. A family should not be governed by passion; Justice should be tempered with judgment and mercy. In vain does the passionate, fractious, turbulent, and inconsiderate person, after being the cause of a whole day's unhappiness and discontent in his family, at night, call on all, or any of them to join him in the worship of God, while every mind is filled with prejudice,

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every eye with evil, and every tongue ready to say, "physician, heal thyself," or otherwise, "thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye." Therefore every ruler of a family should always remember that *example* has the most powerful influence, without which all our admonition will, in all probability, prove ineffectual. Parents should be careful to preserve and cultivate the morals of their children, they should use their authority and not gratify them in their own wicked desires, such as frolicking, vain company keeping, gaming, idle visits on the Lord's day, &c., but should on that day carry them to places of public worship, and after they return endeavor to impress upon their minds the things they heard; for, after giving too great a loose to the reins of our children's lusts, we shall find our reproofs to be in vain. Witness the sons of Eli. 1 Sam. ii. 23, 24, 25. And Solomon says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." Prov. xix. 18. If we cannot command the hearts of our children and family to make them pray, and love God, we may teach and admonish them; and should all our endeavors fail, we may lastly have recourse to the example of Job. Job. i. 5.

And further, with respect to the observation of *good works* relative to *family duty*, it becomes every member of a family to practice the particular duties in the respective places our divine Lord and Master has placed us in, as *husbands* to love their wives, and be not bitter against them. Wives to submit themselves to their own husbands. Servants to be obedient to their masters, and please them in all things. Masters to give unto their servants that which is just and equal. Parents not to provoke their children to anger lest they be discouraged; as well as for children to obey their parents. Col. iii.

When the Kehukee Association began the printing of its circular letters, such letters had already become general in Baptist associations. This is indicated by the report on the various Baptist associations of America for the years 1790, 1791, 1792, 1793 found in Asplund's *Baptist Register* for those years. Though these reports are short, except in the case of the Sandy Creek which seemingly had no circular letters in the early years, and possibly some other Separate Baptist associations, they seldom or never fail to speak of the circular letters, often stating that they were short, only a page or half a page, perhaps an exhortation or explanation of a verse of Scripture.

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On the organization of the Broad River Association in 1800, circular letters seem to have been taken as a matter of course, and usual provision was made for them by an article of the constitution stating that

A circular letter should be written and sent to all the churches in confederation, containing such instruction, information and advice as may be thought most suitable, and with which should be sent the transactions of the association.

This article is virtually the same as that written in the constitution of the Kehukee Association in 1769 and is found in the constitutions of many of the early associations, including those in the wide territory of the original Broad River Association.

Introductory to a more detailed account of the use of circular letters in the Broad River, the Chowan and some other associations is the following more general statement.

The use of circular letters has long been discontinued. Some associations kept them longer than others; in those associations where the *Biblical Recorder* and other denominational periodicals had relatively large circulation, such as the Chowan, circular letters were only sparingly used after 1830, but in the mountain associations, where mail facilities were meager, they were often used until about 1880. In the Broad River Association they were in use in 1851 when the North Carolina churches withdrew to form the King's Mountain Association, and continued to be used by that association at least until 1878 although in years from 1869 on their use was sporadic. In 1869 was written the last of the letters of Brier Creek Association, and the next year saw the last of the Catawba River Association letters. In the King's Mountain Association the last circular letter appears to be that of Elder A. A. McSwain on *Systematic beneficence* written in 1872. In the Tuckaseigee they continued as late as 1877. They were kept longer in the western associations because in the early years the as-



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sociational minutes in which they were published were practically the only ready means of communication with the members of the churches. Their leaders recognized this and were loath to see them go. When in 1857 the Catawba River Association "agreed to discontinue the practice of writing circular letters," the dissatisfaction was so great that the next year they were restored, and kept thirteen years longer.<sup>7</sup> The following extract from *History of the Brier Creek Association* shows how highly they were valued by the able Professor James H. Foote, author, who says at page 204 f.:

For many years it was the custom of the Brier Creek Association to appoint someone of its members to write what they called a circular letter every year to be read before the body . . . and printed in their minutes. Some of these letters would do credit to our ablest divines, and are worthy of a wider circulation; for instance, the one written by Rev. S. P. Smith, in 1847, in which the question, "What is a Church?" is clearly stated and argued in a fair and impartial manner. The question propounded is one about which theologians of all denominations generally differ, but it is answered in a clear and lucid style. The one written by Rev. J. P. Adams in 1858 on "Covetousness" ought to be republished. "The Duty of Churches to their Pastors," written in 1865 by Rev. Y. Jordan gives us briefly a lesson that should be impressed upon every church in the Association. One of the best essays on that difficult subject, "The Doctrine of Election," is handled in a masterly manner by J. A. Martin, a layman, in the year 1868.

The custom of writing these circular letters ceased in the year 1869, the last one having been written by Franklin Gay, and in their place the time is consumed in public discussion of various topics of interest and on reports of committees which attract large crowds of people eager to hear and learn something of the great work now in progress in the Christian world. The good order and decorum observed at these meetings and the adherence of

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<sup>7</sup> With reference to the vote to discontinue, Rev. E. A. Poe, historian of the Association, says (*Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Baptist Association*, p. 11): "I consider this as the most injudicious act of the body up to this time; for by a careful perusal of at least some of the letters in years gone by, I have been greatly strengthened in my confidence in the orthodoxy of the body from its origin to the present." Graham, in his *History of the South Fork Association*, pp. 85-103, published several of these letters.

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strict parliamentary usage would surprise the American Senate and put to shame the noisy and boisterous Houses of the English Parliament.

With this introduction we continue our account of the circular letters of North Carolina Baptists, beginning with those of the Broad River Association, but extending our account to include those of other associations.

In Deacon John R. Logan's *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882* is a very comprehensive account of circular letters of those two associations, with complete lists of the letters, their subjects and writers, while in connection with biographical sketches of the writers, the circular letters are often published in full, but sometimes with abridgement. In the accounts of the proceedings of the Association the circumstances, social and religious, under which the letters were written are often indicated. The lists of the writers and their subjects for these two associations and also for the Chowan Association follow:

### BROAD RIVER ASSOCIATION

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Writer</i>    | <i>Subject</i>  |
|-------------|------------------|---|
| 1802        | Thomas Burgess   | Temperance  |
| 1803        | Perminter Morgan | Doctrines of Grace  |
| 1804        | Joseph Camp      | Church Discipline   |
| 1805        | Ambrose Carlton  | Advocacy of the Son of God  |
| 1806        | Perminter Morgan | Constitution of a Gospel Church<br>and Door of Admission thereto                            |
| 1807        | Ambrose Carlton  | Duties of Deacons   |
| 1808        | William King     | Union and Utility of an Association   |
| 1809        | David Doyale     | How far is an agreement in Religious Sentiments essential to Christian Union and Communion? |
| 1810        | No record        |   |
| 1811        | Drury Dobbins    | Good Works  |
| 1812        | No record        |   |
| 1813        | George Brewton   | The Baneful Effects of Covetousness   |

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| <i>Year</i> | <i>Writer</i>         | <i>Subject</i>   |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1814        | William King          | Gifts and Qualifications of a Gospel Minister  |
| 1815        | Ambrose Carlton       | The Scriptural Reasons why the Baptists do not Commune with other Denominations of Christians                          |
| 1816        | Drury Dobbins         | The Union betwixt Christ and his Church  |
| 1817        | Hosea Holcombe        | The Declension of Religion and the Causes thereof  |
| 1818        | William King          | Of a Baptist Church receiving Members who were Baptized by Immersion in the Methodist Society                          |
| 1819        | Borrowed from Kehukee | Good Works   |
| 1820        | Berryman Hicks        | The Foundations on which Christians can be Agreed  |
| 1821        | Drury Dobbins         | Important Necessity of the Operation of the Spirit of God upon the Soul  |
| 1822        | Samuel Gibson         | On the grand Utility of Faith to the believing Mind  |
| 1823        | Jacob Crocker         | The Manner in which the church of Christ should proceed in calling a pastor  |
| 1824        | Thomas Bomar          | Christian Liberty  |
| 1825        | Berryman Hicks        | The signification of Baptism and what it seals to its proper subjects  |
| 1826        | Hugh Quin             | Law and Grace  |
| 1827        | Gabriel Phillips      | Intemperance   |
| 1828        | George Wilkie         | Wherefore Thou art no more a Servant but a Son, then an Heir of God through Christ                                     |
| 1829        | Drury Dobbins         | The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ  |
| 1830        | Berryman Hicks        | Qualifications and Office-work of a Deacon   |
| 1831        | No record             |  |
| 1832        | Dr. John W. Lewis     | The Proper Method for a Church to pursue in calling a Pastor or Supply, and the duties incumbent on them to each other |

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| <i>Year</i> | <i>Writer</i>      | <i>Subject</i>   |
|-------------|--------------------|--|
| 1833        | Philip Ramsour     | The Method to be pursued to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bonds of Peace   |
| 1834        | Berryman Hicks     | The Design of circumcision, and the difference between that and baptism  |
| 1835        | Drury Dobbins      | The Duty of a Church in the Choice of a Deacon   |
| 1836        | Berryman Hicks     | The Nature of Popery and its probable Tendency in the United States  |
| 1837        | James M. Webb      | The Necessity of the Agency of the Spirit of God in the Work of Regeneration of the Soul   |
| 1838        | Drury Dobbins      | To show who Melchisedec was, and to run the analogy between his priesthood and that of Jesus Christ  |
| 1839        | James M. Webb      | The Divine and special Call from God to Men to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the Evidences that manifest themselves in a person so called |
| 1840        | S. G. Hamilton     | Brotherly Love   |
| 1841        | James M. Webb      | Communion  |
| 1842        | Andrew Fuller      | Church Discipline (adopted)  |
| 1843        | Drury Scruggs      | The Mission of John the Baptist  |
| 1844        | Drury Dobbins      | The Nature and proper Observance of the Lord's Day   |
| 1845        | Micajah C. Barnett | Temperance   |
| 1846        | Wade Hill          | Domestic Missions  |
| 1847        | Micajah C. Barnett | The Unpardonable Sin   |
| 1848        | Drury Scruggs      | Synopsis of the Life and Character of Elder Drury Dobbins  |
| 1849        | Thomas Curtis      | On Baptism as to Mode, Subject and Manner, and more especially in reference to those Paul found at Ephesus   |
| 1850        | Thomas Curtis      | Christian Communion  |
| 1851        | M. C. Barnett      | The Nature of a Call to the Ministry, and the Duty of the Churches to their Gifted Brethren  |



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| <i>Year</i>  | <i>Writer</i>      | <i>Subject</i>   |
|--|--------------------|--|
| 1852   | Micajah C. Barnett | Humiliation and Prayer   |
| 1853   | William Curtis     | The Final Perseverance of the Saints   |
| 1854   | A. J. Cansler      | The Fellowship of Churches   |
| 1855   | William Curtis     | The Correlative Duties of Churches and Ministers   |
| 1856   | Thomas Curtis      | Popery, and its probable tendencies in the United States                                 |
| 1857   | Micajah C. Barnett | Sabbath Schools  |
| 1858   | Thomas Curtis      | The proper observance of the Sabbath by our churches and people                          |
| 1859   | John S. Ezell      | Personality  |
| 1860   | William Curtis     | Systematic effort in spreading the Gospel  |
| 1861   | Drury Scruggs      | Collection of historical statistics  |
| 1862   | William Curtis     | The wants of churches  |
| 1863   | M. C. Barnett      | National calamities  |
| 1864   | E. A. Crawley      | The making of our lives to correspond to the meaning of the ordinance of Baptism         |
| 1865   | M. C. Barnett      | The importance of Sunday schools to our churches, and the best method of conducting them |
| 1866   | M. C. Barnett      | Revivals of Religion   |
| 1867   | William Curtis     | Christian ministry   |
| 1868   | William Curtis     | Ministerial Education  |
| 1869-1871 No letters. During these years an associational history which from year to year was expected to serve as the circular letter, was in preparation, and was finally published out of season between the sessions of 1870 and 1871. |                    |  |
| 1872   | No record          |  |
| 1873   | No record          |  |
| 1874   | No record          |  |
| 1875   | J. G. Carter       | The Final Perseverance of the Saints in Grace  |
| 1876   | J. R. Jefferies    | The Teachings of Christ  |
| 1877   | John R. Jefferies  | The Nature, Design, Qualifications and Duties of Deaconship                              |
| 1878   | Lewis Meng         | The Importance of Teaching our Peculiar Principles and Tenets as Baptists                |

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## KING'S MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Writer</i>        | <i>Subject</i>  |
|-------------|----------------------|---|
| 1852        | John R. Logan        | The Duties of Church Members<br>towards each other  |
| 1853        | Dove Parnell         | Election  |
| 1854        | Thomas Dixon         | Nature, Design and Application<br>of the Atonement of Jesus<br>Christ   |
| 1855        | Joseph Suttle        | Missions  |
| 1856        | George W. Rollins    | Repentance  |
| 1857        | Alexander J. Cansler | The Design of the Lord's Supper   |
| 1858        | No record            |   |
| 1859        | Joseph Suttle        | Prayer  |
| 1860        | L. M. Berry          | The Design and Authority of<br>Associations and the true Re-<br>lations existing between them<br>and the Churches they repre-<br>sent |
| 1861        | G. W. Rollins        | Christian Love  |
| 1862        | J. R. Logan          | A Synoptical History of the<br>Broad River and King's Moun-<br>tain Associations  |
| 1863        | No record            |   |
| 1864        | Gabriel Phillips     | Intemperance  |
| 1865        | Larkin M. Berry      | The proper observance of the<br>Christian Sabbath   |
| 1866        | J. R. Logan          | The New Obligations of Peace  |
| 1867        | Robert Poston        | Temperance  |
| 1868        | J. H. Yarboro        | Missions  |
| 1869        | G. M. Webb           | Design of Baptism   |
| 1870        | No record            |   |
| 1871        | No record            |   |
| 1872        | A. A. McSwain        | Systematic beneficence  |

## CHOWAN ASSOCIATION

|      |                              |   |
|------|------------------------------|---|
| 1806 | Lemuel Burkitt               | State of a Christian Backslider               |
| 1807 | Lemuel Burkitt               | Christian Patience                            |
| 1808 | James Ross                   | Watchfulness                                  |
| 1809 | Martin Ross                  | Watchfulness (continuation)                   |
| 1810 | James Wright                 | Intemperance                                  |
| 1811 | Richard Poindexter           | Sanctification                                |
| 1812 | No record—minutes<br>missing |   |
| 1813 | James Woodbury               | Excellency of the Religion of<br>Jesus Christ |

## CIRCULAR LETTERS

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Writer</i>                                    | <i>Subject</i>                                      |
|-------------|--|---|
| 1814        | James Wright                                     | Practical Religion                                  |
| 1815        | Aaron Spivey                                     | Covenant of Redemption                              |
| 1816        | John Wheeler                                     | The Holy Bible, its Importance and Utility          |
| 1817        | From the minutes of the Charleston Ass'n of 1809 | Duty of Observing the Christian Sabbath             |
| 1818        | Benjamin F. Farnsworth                           | Our Holy Religion, Works and Fruits of Faith        |
| 1819        | Thomas Billings                                  | Essential Qualifications of a Christian Minister    |
| 1820        | None   |   |
| 1821        | James Wright                                     | Immutability of God                                 |
| 1822        | William J. Newbern                               | Reading and Searching the Scriptures                |
| 1823        | Jeremiah Etheridge                               | Nature, Fruits and Evidence of Christian Experience |
| 1824        | Selection from <i>Rippon's Baptist Register</i>  | Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ                   |
| 1825        | William H. Jordan                                | Spiritual-Mindedness                                |
| 1826        | Letter of Va. Portsmouth Bapt. Association       | Church Discipline                                   |
| 1827        | Martin Ross                                      | Biographical Sketch of Thomas Brownrigg             |
| 1828        | Thomas Meredith                                  | Sketch of Martin Ross                               |
| 1829        | James Wright                                     | Open and Close Communion                            |
| 1830        | J. G. Hall                                       | Coldness and Lukewarmness                           |
| 1831        | No letter  |   |
| 1832        | No letter  |   |
| 1833        | No letter  |   |
| 1834        | No letter  |   |
| 1835        | Andrew M. Craig                                  | Obituary of Turner Carter                           |
| 1836        | J. J. Finch                                      | The Importance of Christian Union                   |
| 1837        | No letter  |   |
| 1838        | Neuse Association                                | Family Religion                                     |

Probably it was in the Broad River Association and the other associations formed from it, the King's Mountain and the Catawba River, that the writing of circular letters, beginning with the organization of the parent association in 1800 and continuing until 1869, had its greatest develop-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

ment. By checking these lists it may be seen that in the Broad River Association in the period from 1802 to 1851 a circular letter was written in each of forty-six years, and each letter the product of an individual writer chosen at the session of the Association a year before that at which it was presented. Some wrote more than one letter, several wrote two, and the popular Drury Dobbins wrote as many as seven in his more than forty years of service as pastor of Sandy Run Church, while his friend and neighbor, Berryman Hicks, pastor of Buffalo Church, wrote five; the number of such writers was twenty-four, of nearly all of whom letters or extracts from letters are found in Logan's volume and in some instances elsewhere.

A further check would show that these letters dealt in a very practical way with the changing conditions, social, moral, economical, religious, and denominational that affected the life and progress of the members of the churches. They were often designed to warn the people of the tendencies to moral degeneracy that were becoming more and more pronounced in the new settlements of the Carolinas in the early period, and to enlist their members in the fight against it.

According to all accounts the most common evil in those early days was intemperance, which, according to the interpretation given the term by the writers of the circular letters, included all forms of over-indulgence of the appetites and passions, and lack of sobriety and moderation, and restraint in word and deed, and the lack of self control. Its most frequent manifestation was in the free and excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages, an evil then prevalent in all parts of North Carolina, but perhaps greater in the western than in the eastern part of the State. In the face of this great evil the civil government seemed powerless. The hope of rescuing our people, rich and poor, from its increasing demoralization was the home and the church.



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Both were needed and both did a salutary service, but it was the churches whose ministers stood on the housetops and warned of the danger. The first circular letter of the Broad River Association, written at the request of the Association at the session of 1801 by the moderator, Elder Thomas Burgess, had for its subject "Intemperance." Of this Logan gives the following account:<sup>8</sup>

About the time the Broad River Association was organized in 1800 the demon of intemperance is said to have held high carnival throughout the entire bounds of the body and many of the members of churches were claimed by him as special devotees, and it is only too true when we say they were often found worshipping at his filthy shrines. Our fathers had gallantly succeeded in removing from their shoulders the shackles of British tyranny; but now alas! they had to encounter and grapple with a foe more vicious and demoralizing. The Broad River Association at its first session in 1801 at Green's Creek, commenced a defensive movement by requiring their venerable presiding officer Elder *Thomas Burgess*, to issue an address or *Circular Letter* to the several churches in union in the name of the Association warning them to be on the alert and to beware of the seducing and dangerous effects of this now popular demon. In that address the Moderator exhorts the brethren to "keep their bodies in subjection, watch against unlawful desires, and oppose within themselves, all unlawful appetites and refrain from shameful and outbreacking practices, &c."

The fight was on and it was to be long continued. At the session of the Association in 1827 a resolution was adopted against supporting candidates for public office who treat with spirituous liquors to obtain votes, and members of the churches were advised to abstain from the habitual use of ardent spirits.<sup>9</sup> "Intemperance" was the subject of the circular letter of this year. It was written by the moderator,

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<sup>8</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Association, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Other associations, the Sandy Creek and the Yadkin, passed like resolutions about the same time. As we have seen in our account of other associations, this fight against intemperance was by no means confined to the Broad River Association and its daughter associations, but was general among associations and in the Baptist State Convention, and was the subject of circular letters in some of them, of which notice will be taken in place.

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Elder Gabriel Phillips, a writer of much skill and ability. The drink evil had increased rather than diminished. "The present age," said he, "might emphatically be styled the drunken age, so much does inebriety prevail." In his argument he shows much sympathy for the drinkers and makes a strong personal appeal to them to desist from their evil practice which inevitably will bring them to utter ruin in this world and the next; he tells them of medicines recently discovered and obtainable in seaports, "the benign effects of which, 'tis said, will deter the tippling maniac and bid him sin no more. Amen! say we, to the successful issue of these humane efforts: and let us, dear brethren unite in earnest supplication to the great Creator, that his creatures may cease to defile the image of their Maker by brutal sensuality, as in that image they were created; and verily we say unto them that in brutalizing the creature they heinously offend the Creator."<sup>10</sup> The last circular letter on Intemperance before the formation of the King's Mountain Association in 1851 was that of 1845, by Elder M. C. Barnett. Of this Logan says,<sup>11</sup> "The document is rather of a general character, in which there is but slight allusion to intemperate dram-drinking."<sup>12</sup>

In the King's Mountain Association Elder Robert Poston, having been unable to provide the letter on "Intemperance" for the meeting of 1864, wrote the letter for 1867 on the co-ordinate subject of "Temperance." It is an excellent

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<sup>10</sup> This letter was adopted by the King's Mountain Association in 1864 as its annual circular letter.

<sup>11</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup> In 1859 different views on the temperance question caused division of the King's Mountain Association. At the meeting of the Association in that year, after hearing and adopting a resolution of the Committee on Temperance, the Association adopted a resolution, reading "We will withdraw ourselves from any church in our union which holds a member or members who buys, sells or drinks as a common beverage any kind of intoxicating spirits." The result was a division of the Association which continued until 1866. Of this some account is given in chapter XXV.

discussion in which the writer shows a discriminating understanding and assembles the New Testament teachings with much fullness and clearness.

Another bad moral condition that prevailed at the time of the organization of the Broad River Association was "great laxity in reference to the strict observance of matrimonial relations." In response to queries on this subject, it had been discussed first by the Association of 1801, and again in 1802, when Elder Joseph Camp was appointed to discuss the whole matter in a circular letter to the churches. This he did, for the meeting of the Association in 1804 in a letter entitled "Church Discipline."

Several of the circular letters had the very practical purpose of giving information about the nature of an association and of a church, and the qualifications, manner of election and duties of officers. In 1808, on appointment of the Association, Elder William King, from the Head of Enoree Church, prepared a letter on "The Union and Utility of an Association," which might be read with profit by many Baptists of today. His closing section reads:

Thirdly. Of the utility or usefulness of an Association.

A body of wise and holy men in such a happy union, and governed by truth, can not fail in being useful. The wise man says: "In the multitude of counsel there is safety," (which tends to usefulness.) In an Association there is a multitude of counsel, which tends to usefulness; therefore an Association is useful. In such a collection of lights, like bright constellations, the light will shine more clear, and of course discover the hidden works of darkness more plainly, and deep things will be understood with greater ease. It is here a godly minister will be encouraged, while the reverse will be discountenanced; it is here difficult queries may be proposed and answered; it is here counterfeit tenets and practices may be detected and put down; it is here an aggrieved church may obtain redress, when all other means fail; it is here a member, not justly dealt by, may make known his case and find redress. In an associate capacity, churches and ministers may meet and take sweet counsel, cultivate christian friendship, and be of mutual advantage to each other while in a troublesome world.

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In the years before there were manuals on the subject, the churches needed to be instructed on the choice and duties of deacons in a Baptist church. To meet this need, in 1807, "The Circular Letter to the churches, prepared by Elder Ambrose Carlton, on the duties of deacons, was read and adopted by the body, and is an able and judicious production."<sup>13</sup> Twenty-three years later, in 1830, when the number of churches and members had been greatly increased, and old minutes rare, the need of a new statement on deacons was felt, and Elder Berryman Hicks supplied it in a circular letter entitled "The Qualifications and Office-work of a Deacon," which in 1835 was supplemented by the letter written by Elder Drury Dobbins with the title, "The Duty of a Church in the Choice of a Deacon."

In the early years the Baptists of the pioneer churches of the Broad River Association were already having their share of trouble in securing and keeping proper ministers. Hoping to be helpful in this matter Elder Jacob Crocker set about preparing the circular letter for the Association of 1823, of which the author's introduction and some other extracts are given below:

We have felt ourselves at some loss for a subject, as almost every subject that could give information has already been touched on; nevertheless we, as your council, feel ourselves bound to give you all the information and instruction that we are able to do. We shall address you this year on *the manner in which a church of Christ should proceed in calling a pastor or supply*. Secondly, shall say a few things relative to the ministers' qualifications. And thirdly, the ministers' duty to the church. Fourthly, the church's duty to their pastor or supply. . . .

A church of Christ being destitute of a pastor should, in the first place, be sensible of their destitute condition, and should remember that God has promised to hear their prayers and grant all their laudable requests; they should converse freely together with a desire that God would direct them in the right way, not forgetting His promise that, "whatsoever they shall ask in Christ's

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<sup>13</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 23.



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name, He will give it." John xv. 16. Again, "ask and ye shall receive." John xvi 24.

A church should be unanimous in their choice of a minister and should in some degree know the minds of the congregation in general, that their choice may be a blessing to those who are without. I Tim. iii. 7. When the mind of the church is made up, of course it centers on one preacher (not on two or three;) then the church should make known their proceedings to the preacher, giving him a call, and at the same time requesting the church having his membership to give him up. When these measures are taken by a church, and no striving one against the other—but all engaged in prayer—there is no reason to doubt but that God will give the preacher selected a proper weight of that people, and they will come together and be made a blessing to each other—although at the same time this church may have a preacher among them; yet they are not bound to have him as their pastor if he is not their choice. Churches too often ordain preachers for others that they would not be willing to have themselves, which cannot be very prudent on their part.

Agreeable to our promise in the method first proposed, we shall in the second place say something relative to the call and qualifications of a minister of the Gospel. From the information we have received from the Word of God, we have no right to believe that God sends unconverted men to preach the Gospel. A man must be a christian before he can properly be a Gospel minister; he must receive that call which Paul speaks of, 2 Tim. i. 9. "who hath saved and called us with an holy calling;" he must receive that faith which the Scriptures say is the gift of God. Eph. ii. 8. He must then receive an inward and special call from God, as was Aaron. Heb. v. 4. He must feel it impressed on his mind that a dispensation of the Gospel is committed unto him, and must feel something of the weight of that woe pronounced against all those who refuse to preach when God calls. He must have correct ideas of the plan of salvation through Christ. We think that a man with the above qualifications is one that God intends shall preach the Gospel. . . . A church should not be too hasty in ordaining preachers. Although they may have a promising gift, Paul says "lay hands suddenly on no man." Tim. v. 22. We have seen some of the bad effects of such hasty proceedings in churches. Some preachers think that when they are ordained they are equal with the Apostle Paul. . . .

Thirdly, the pastor's duty to his flock. He should remember that God has committed to him a great charge; he should consider himself on Zion's wall, and that the Lord has set him there to watch for souls and feed the flocks of God; taking the oversight (1 Pet. v. 2.) to speak the things which become sound doctrine

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(Tit. ii. 1,) and study to show himself approved unto God. 1 Tim. ii. 15. He should make himself acquainted with that discipline which Christ has established, that he may under God afford the church every needful information; he should pray to God to enable him to make use of arguments that might prove effectual in bringing sinners to Christ; he should consider himself the servant of the church (2 Cor. iv. 5;) he should attend their stated meetings; in a word, he should be ready to serve the people of his charge as far as he is able.

We now come to the fourth and last thing promised, which was to say something relative to the duties of the church to their pastor. First, they should stand by him in all of his difficulties, bear up his hands by their prayers; they should know those who labor among them, and are over them in the Lord, and esteem such very highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thes. v. 12, 13,) and should follow him as he follows Christ. And as he sows to them in spiritual things he should reap of their carnal things (1 Cor. ix. 11,) which, with a number of other passages, prove that it is the church's duty to support their minister. But this with many other duties are too much neglected. Some people appear to think that preachers and their families can live on the empty air. Few are acquainted with the disadvantages and hardships that ministers and their families labor under. Some members never contribute anything—not even for the Lord's table—which is no doubt owing to deacons neglecting their duty. But as our limits admonish us, we shall conclude, beseeching you, brethren, to remember your Lord and Master's words: "If you love me, keep my commandments." John xiv. 15. Again, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." Rev. iii. 2.

In 1832, another letter on the same subject was prepared by Dr. John W. Lewis, who had recently "resigned his seat in the South Carolina Legislature . . . for the Gospel's sake" and, already a distinguished physician, was to become one of the ablest Baptist ministers, first in South Carolina and later in Georgia.<sup>14</sup> This letter differs from that of Crocker in being the work of a scholar in faultless English style and more orderly in development, but, all told, less comprehensive. It seems to have been the design of the writer to

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<sup>14</sup> Cathcart's *Baptist Encyclopedia*; Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1832*, pp. 449 ff., 462 ff.

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supplement the statements of Crocker by making certain of them clearer and giving increased emphasis to others; in particular, he enlarges most convincingly on the reciprocal duties of churches and pastors.<sup>15</sup>

A dozen other circular letters, nearly all powerful productions, were designed to ground the members of the churches in the faith, and in particular Baptist principles and practices regarding the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Among the earliest of such letters was that of Perminster Morgan in 1803, "Doctrines of Grace," which is described by Logan as a "brief but very comprehensive letter breathing strong anti-arminian sentiments,"<sup>16</sup> and seemingly designed to check the disregard in the churches of the doctrines of "Free Grace," predestination and the hyper-Calvinistic Election of the Philadelphia Confession, a question which, as we have seen, soon engendered bitter strife in the French Broad Association. In 1806 the same author had another letter intended to instruct the churches on the "Constitution of a Baptist Church and the Door of Admission thereto." A new approach to the subject is seen in the letter of Elder David Doyale of the New Salem Church in 1809, which was intended to answer the question brought before the Association in a query, "How far is an agreement in religious sentiments essential to Christian union and communion?" More definite is the letter of 1815, prepared by Elder Ambrose Carlton, "The Scriptural Reasons why the Baptists do not commune with other Denominations of Christians," which Logan calls "a most excellent letter,"<sup>17</sup> and which is of special interest since it is one of the three circular letters which make up the pub-

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<sup>15</sup> The circular letter of the Chowan Association in 1819 was entitled "The Essential Qualifications of a Christian Minister." It is a scholarly production, and may be read in the Chowan Association Minutes for that year.

<sup>16</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 33.

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lished writings of that pioneer Baptist minister of Burke County, and founder of the Smyrna Church. As early as 1818 the question of alien immersion was troubling the Broad River churches and was discussed by Elder William King to instruct on the propriety of "a Baptist Church receiving members who were baptized by immersion in the Methodist Society."

Elder Berryman Hicks, able and zealous but unlettered, wrote several circular letters in which he makes an exposition of Baptist principles and powerfully defends them in an uncompromising manner and trenchant words.

The first, prepared for the session of the Association of 1820, discusses "The Foundations on which Christians can be Agreed." With some abridgement it is given below. It well illustrates the ability and argumentative skill with which an intellectually strong but poorly educated Baptist minister of the early years sought to gain acceptance for Baptist principles. Elder Hicks begins by stating the Baptist position, as a Baptist subscribing to the Philadelphia Confession conceives it:

... The word christian properly implies one who, by the gracious and almighty act of the Divine Spirit, is actually separated from the world by effectual calling which is sovereign, unconditional, particular and immutable, in consequence of which he is redeemed and everlastingly saved by Jesus Christ. (John xv. 19; Eph. i. 4; Thess. ii. 13.) He is under solemn obligations to walk in all the commands of the Lord, and in so doing is entitled to all the privileges of the church of Christ. The latter is for him alone, and the former binding upon him and no other character whatever. (Matt. xi. 29; John x. 4.) Any acting contrary to this must be guilty of a most egregious error; must fly in the face of authority, and give that which is holy unto the dogs, which our Lord has strictly forbidden. (Matt. vii. 6.) There is one Lord who is our Creator, preserver, and Saviour; one faith which is the gift of God, that purifies the heart and works by love. (Eph. iv. 5; Gal. v. 6;) And one baptism which is an ordinance of the New Testament, instituted by Jesus Christ, whereby a professed believer in Christ is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, im-



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mersed in and covered with water; and then raised up out of it as a sign of his fellowship with Christ—in His death, burial and resurrection, and a sign of His own death to sin and resurrection to newness of life here and to life eternal hereafter. (Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5; Col. ii. 12.)

Christ cannot be divided—genuine faith is not divided. And this sacred ordinance of believers—baptism by immersion—is not, cannot be divided; therefore this is the only foundation on which christians can be agreed. Many have been and all should be.

Objection by question 1st, cannot the Anti-Pedo-Baptists and Pedo-Baptists come together, be agreed, and have a general union on some other foundation?

Answer.—We cannot; for all other foundations, when compared with the above named, dwindle into nothing—are only tradition, or the commandments of men; therefore are not permanent.

Question 2nd, can not we come together, be agreed, and have a general union, and say nothing about our foundation?

Answer.—We can not; it would only be a pretended union; for how shall two walk together except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3.

Question 3d, can you not bend a little, so that we can be agreed? for would it not be most to the glory of God and the prosperity of Zion for us all to unite together?

Answer.—We can not bend little or much; we can not go beyond the Word of the Lord, or depart from His commandments—because we love Him. “For we are not as many which corrupt the word of God, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty—not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.” (2 Cor. ii. 17. iv. 2.) If the Lord designs that all christians shall be agreed, and a general union take place, He will effect it upon the foundation that standeth sure, and undoubtedly it will be most to His glory and the prosperity of Zion; and we say Lord, hasten the time. But if it tarry we must wait for it.

Question 4th, can we not be agreed and come together upon this:—think and let think?

Answer.—Impossible; for there is no agreement or union in this phrase at all; for instance, one may say I think there is no God, angel or spirit. I think, says another, there are ten thousand Gods. Another, I think all mankind will be saved. Another, I think there are no future rewards or punishments. Another, I think all mankind will be saved. Another, I think there is no resurrection of the dead. Another, I think Mahomet was greater and better than Jesus Christ. Another, I think the Pope is greater than Mahomet, I think David Durrow or Ann Lee is greater than either. Thus it is evident that “think and let think” will admit that Paganism, Atheism, Deism, Universalism, Mahometanism, Roman Catholicism,

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and Shakerism all stand upon an equal footing with the Christian religion, which we dare not admit.

Question 5th: but leaving all these as heretics, and coming among ourselves, who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that the Christian religion is the only religion that can make men happy, here or hereafter, we contend that we can come together on this, to think and let think.

Answer.—In confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, we do acknowledge four important things. First, that there are christians; secondly; that there are certain examples, precepts and ordinances in the Gospel; thirdly, that those christians should strictly adhere to them; and fourthly, that if they do not, they are guilty of an error in leaving undone the things they should have done.

It is not a supposition—or I think with us—but is absolutely reduced to a certainty, and we know. Therefore “think and let think” can not have a place amongst us. It is time it was buried forever, for it not only admits of heresy, folly and sin, but will do away the commandments of God, and is not able to justify us in His sight.

But further, we know that christians are saved by grace through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God. (Eph. ii. 8, 9.) We think that all men have light and power sufficient given them, if they will improve it, to bring them to Jesus Christ. We know that every soul that receives a pardon of sin, through the atoning merits of Christ, shall be saved with an everlasting salvation. (Isa. xiv. 17; John x. 27, 28, 29; 1 Peter i. 3, 4, 5.) We think the child of God may apostatize, and be forever lost. We know that believers are the only subjects of baptism. (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38, 41; viii. 12; ix. 18; xvi. 15, 33; xviii. 8.) We think penitents and infants are subjects of baptism. We know immersion is the only mode of baptism. (Matt. iii. 16; John iii. 23; Acts viii. 36, 38, 39; Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5; Col. ii. 12.) We think pouring or sprinkling is the only mode of baptism, but rather than lose a member, we would immerse him, for we think we might act upon his faith.

We know “whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. xiv. 23.) And we know that none has a right to come to the communion table but orderly, regularly baptized believers. (Ex. xii. 43-49; Num. xviii. 11; Matt. xxvi. 26-29; 1 Cor. v. 11; x. 7, 14-21.) We think all may come to the table that will.

Thus we see that “think and let think” will not do for a foundation. And know and think are very far from being agreed, then all must know, and all comply, and all will be agreed. Then this great and sweet union will take place upon the right foundation.

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Question 6th. As we all profess to believe in Jesus Christ, can we not be agreed by laying aside all our non-essentials?

Answer.—If you have non-essentials, you are at liberty to lay them aside. We humbly request you to do so; but we have not any non-essentials. A firm belief in Jesus Christ is essential to salvation. And all the examples, precepts and ordinances of the blessed Gospel is essential to the peace, happiness, love, joy, honor, glory, adorning, beautifying, and prosperity of the Church of Christ. Therefore we cannot—we dare not lay them aside.

Question 7th. Have we not as good a right to our opinion and belief as you have for yours?

Answer.—There is as great a necessity for you to believe right as for us; and if your opinion and belief is really congenial with the Scripture, you have as good a right, and we should be no more twain, but one. But if it is not, you have not as good a right; and for us to say you have, would be giving up the point, which we dare not do. (Jude i. 3.) And between us we should thereby make the plain written word as an old enigma put forth, and everybody left to guess at the meaning.

Question 8th. Are you not a very narrow-hearted and bigoted sect? Do you not assume to yourselves infallibility and unchristian all other denominations?

Answer.—Our hearts and the doors of our churches are as wide as the door of mercy, and we pity those whose hearts and doors are wider. We are much attached to the commands of God and our sacred profession. We are not blindly zealous, but by the light of Divine Truth we stick to the commands to a punctilio, and find rest to our souls. And if we are condemned for doing right, so was our Lord and Master, and we are not greater than He. We do not assume infallibility; as mortals we are fallible, but the God we worship and obey is infallible. His Gospel, commands, example, precepts and ordinances are all infallible. This is the old way—this is the good and right way. This is the foundation of which christians can be agreed. Do not censure us for continuing therein, but come, O do come, and walk with us, and let us rejoice together, and feel “a heavenly union.” We do not unchristian all others, but do believe there are many precious christians of other denominations, but they are undutiful—yet we love them, and wish them to do well. Therefore we are waiting with open doors, hearts and hands to receive you. God commands you—Jesus invites you—we are looking for you—you may come—you can come—you ought to come—do pray come, and let us be agreed upon this precious living foundation, Jesus Christ, His doctrine, and holy Gospel ordinances. This is the only foundation of which christians can be sweetly and lastingly agreed. Therefore, we

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again say, come! Behold! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

Now to the God who is able to bring and establish all christians upon this foundation, and give us sweetest union, be honor and glory forever. Amen.

In 1825, Elder Hicks made the circular letter an elaborate essay on "The Signification of Baptism and what it seals to its proper subjects." In October 1834, he prepared the circular letter on "The Design of Circumcision, and the Difference between that and Baptism," a clear, well ordered and instructive statement, much needed in the day when one of the principal arguments of pedobaptists was that infant baptism filled the place in the New Dispensation that circumcision had among the Jews. In 1841 the able James M. Webb used a circular letter to set forth a powerful exposition of the New Testament teachings on the Lord's Supper. As told in another section, Dr. Thomas Curtis wrote the circular letter of 1849 on Baptism and that of 1850 on the Lord's Supper. Both are clear and convincing arguments for the correctness of the Baptist position on these ordinances. The two were published in a pamphlet which was widely distributed and seemed to have served the churches of the Broad River section for many years. However, interest in the ordinances continued. In 1869 Elder G. M. Webb, son of J. M. Webb, wrote the next to the last circular letter of the King's Mountain Association on the subject of Baptism. It is simple, easily understood, comprehensive, and of much practical value. In 1864 Dr. Edmund A. Crawley, a native of England, born in 1799, and for many years a Baptist minister and educator, one-time president of Acadia College in Nova Scotia, and in 1864 the pastor of the Baptist Church of Shelby, North Carolina, and principal of the Female Seminary there, wrote the circular letter for the Broad River Association on "Making Lives Correspond to the Meaning of the Ordinance of Baptism." He says in part:



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Is it not the admitted design of this ordinance to give new force to the highest truths of Christianity, by presenting them to the eye, as well as the understanding, in vivid symbol? Baptism proclaims the uncompromising character of the religion of Jesus, which tolerates no superficial work as fitting a man for heaven. . . . Behold the Baptist then, bound by his belief and his profession to be a living witness in his life and character of that spiritual element which the ordinance of baptism proclaims!

In another very important way the circular letters of the Broad River Association were helpful in keeping the members of their churches from forsaking sound doctrine: several were written to emphasize the necessity of the work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of the soul. Reliance on the Holy Ghost had characterized the great evangelistic work of Shubal Stearns. In western North Carolina, however, there were influences that tended to make religion formal and mechanistic and credal. To check such degeneracy as resulted in Campbellism, Drury Dobbins, already a great evangelist, prepared the circular letter of 1821 on "The Important Necessity of the Operation of the Spirit of God on the Soul," and in 1837 Elder James M. Webb prepared another on the same subject.

Another letter of Elder Berryman Hicks was that written in 1836 on "The Nature of Popery, and its Probable Tendency in the United States of America." It is well conceived, giving an outline sketch of Catholicism, ending with a statement of its development in the United States in the year 1836, when it was already regarded as a portentous menace. Hicks thought that the answer of Baptists to the persecution of the Church of Rome should be toleration. He says:

In conclusion, how are we to avert the storm that seems to be hanging over us? Is persecution the proper remedy? No. Is a troublous mob, excited to destroy their property and temples? By no means. Toleration is our peculiar boast. Let it be fully and sincerely manifested to all men, but with a becoming zeal toward God, earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

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The more general Christian doctrines and virtues are often made the subject of circular letters. One of these was "Of the grand Utility of Faith to the Believing Mind," prepared for the session of the Broad River Association of 1822 by Elder Samuel Gibson, of whom Logan says: <sup>18</sup> "He was a native Scotchman. . . . He ranked among the ablest preachers of the Association; was about the co-equal of Elders Dobbins and Hicks." In his clear analysis and development of his subject in this letter he shows himself inferior to none. His letter is in simple language, mediated to the understanding of an unlettered reader, and, like nearly all these letters, has a practical purpose and a pro-treptic close.

The circular letter of 1824 by Elder Thomas Bomar, the minister of the Bethlehem Church in the Spartanburg district, had for its subject "Christian Liberty," and is an able discussion. The following extracts exhibit its character.

Christian liberty further consists in a privilege to use and enjoy, in a lawful manner, those temporal blessings which God has provided for mankind in common—such as eating, drinking, &c., together with all the real or lawful enjoyments arising from the nuptial or social life. . . . Thus, brethren, we see that although christians under the Gospel are freed from the ceremonies of the Jewish law, from the condemning power of the moral law, and have liberty to come to the throne of grace and plead the merits of their blessed High Priest, yet they have no liberty to neglect the ordinances of the Gospel, or to indulge in sin.

The most popular minister in the association, Elder Drury Dobbins, wrote a greater number of circular letters in these years than any other writer, as many as seven in all. Though Dobbins' early education was neglected, he was a close student all his life and became familiar with the Bible and many of the best works on theology. Logan says of him: <sup>19</sup> "He was very deliberate and dignified in his man-

<sup>18</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 386.

<sup>19</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 359.

ner, and somewhat slow in arriving at a conclusion—to which point he never would arrive until after he had examined all the weak points of the case supposed to be assailable. . . . Yet his innate, natural powers of mind and memory gave him the character of an intellectual giant.” He wrote his first circular letter in 1811 on “Good Works.” It is a simple and comprehensive development of the subject, in harmony with the regular Baptist views.<sup>20</sup> In 1844 Elder Dobbins prepared the circular letter, writing on “The Observance of the Lord’s Day.” The subjects of other letters are: “The important Necessity of the Operation of the Spirit of God upon the Soul” (1821); “The Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (1829); “To show who Melchisedek was, and to run the Analogy between his Priesthood and that of Jesus Christ” (1838). All of these seem to have been prepared with much care and effort for accuracy of statement. Even that on Melchisedek is still interesting and instructive. Of the letter of 1816, “The Union betwixt Christ and his Church,” Logan says: <sup>21</sup> “. . . a very concise and appropriate document which should be reproduced.”

In 1846 the circular letter of the Broad River Association was by Elder Wade Hill on the subject of “Domestic Missions.” The letter itself is a powerful argument based on quotations from the New Testament for the purpose of stimulating the churches to an increased interest in missions and a recognition of their duty to unite and as an association to be more active in their support. Near the close of his rather long letter he said:

. . . You will please notice again, that the disciples and brethren were careful in their church capacity to inquire and ascertain where the preaching of the Word was especially needed; that they were frequently seen sending the ministers, chosen and chief men, such

<sup>20</sup> It has been published not only in the minutes, but also in Logan’s volume, pp. 362-364, and in Graham’s *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, pp. 24-28, to which readers are referred.

<sup>21</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King’s Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 34.

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as had ability and fitness, especially to meet the pending emergency, to preach the Gospel, teach the people, confirm the brethren, dispel error, and establish the laws of the King of Zion in the hearts of the people; and that in every instance God owned and blessed their labors by the immediate overshadowing of His mercy, and out-pouring of His grace and love among the people where they labored.

In 1846, however, in the Broad River Association the churches had not yet learned that it was the part of an association to act as agent for them in missionary work. As told above, owing largely to the fact that the churches of the Broad River were some in North Carolina and others in South Carolina, they had not joined the Convention of either state, and knew little of the mission boards. The year before, 1845, they had rejected, after considerable discussion, a petition that the Association would establish a domestic mission within their bounds. But the fight continued. In 1846 Elder Hill, a strong advocate of missions, brought his letter on Domestic Missions to the attention of the Association. Again there was considerable debate continuing for two days. Supporting Elder Hill's views were Elder J. M. Webb, who had recently gone to the Green River Association, and Elder Thomas Curtis, who, with his son, Dr. William Curtis, had come during the year to Limestone Springs. Against the adoption of Hill's letter was Elder Drury Dobbins, who for more than forty years had been doing missionary work throughout the territory of the Association. "Elder Dobbins was not opposed," says Logan,<sup>22</sup> "to missionary operation among the churches, *as churches*, but was opposed to any action by the Association, as an agent with plenary powers, to inaugurate such a scheme or system of measures as that indicated in Elder Hill's circular. He claimed that he was a 'go-between' the two extremes, and would favor any action taken by the

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<sup>22</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 66.



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churches, as such, for the furtherance of domestic missions, while he would at all times oppose any action on the part of the Association to lord it over the churches, without first being asked by them to do so. He was aware, too, that there was strong opposition to the principles of the letter, as manifested by the action taken on the subject at the last session, on the petition sent up from Long Creek, praying the establishment of a domestic mission. He would therefore oppose the adoption of the letter, unless certain objectionable features were stricken out. It was very obvious that Elder Dobbins wielded the greater strength of the body, and was fully able to defeat the adoption of the letter which, however, out of respect for Elder Hill's feelings he did not wish to do. At the instance of Elder Webb, the objectionable features of the letter were stricken out by erasure with the pen, and the debate ceased by the adoption of the letter with corrections."

The fight for missions, however, continued. The next year saw the formation of the "Broad River Society for the Spread of the Gospel," which continued operations, part of the time with the help of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and with Elder Wade Hill as missionary, for nine years, all the time enjoying the good will and favor of the Association, until 1856, when the Society and the Association were merged with the unanimous approval of the members of both bodies.

The associations formed from churches dismissed from the Broad River carried with them the practice of writing circular letters. In the year 1828, the Catawba River, on completing its organization, appointed Elder Reuben Coffee of the Globe Church to write the circular letter for 1829, but he failed to attend the meeting of that year and did not read his letter until 1831. Thereafter they were regularly produced with the exception of a few years until 1870. Account of about thirty of them is given by Elder E. A. Poe

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in his *Historical Sketch of the Catawba River Baptist Association, 1827-1867*. Poe mentions ten writers, whose names with the number of letters each wrote were: Thomas Carlton and Alexander Abernathy, six each; A. C. Grayson and R. H. Moody, four each; Alfred Webb and T. Craig, two each; while Reuben Coffee, R. B. Jones, J. H. Spainhour and A. J. Cansler wrote one each.

By request of the Association nearly all of these were published in the printed minutes of the Association, but in 1864 the Association asked that the circular letter be sent to the *Biblical Recorder*; in some other years the minutes of this association were not published, and for all years they are now very rare. However, Major W. A. Graham in his *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*,<sup>23</sup> includes three of these letters and an extract from another—a letter by Elder Thomas Carlton (1851) on the subject of “Communion,” and an extract from another (1856) on “Missions”; a letter by Elder R. B. Jones (1854), “The Design of Church Organization”; a letter by Elder Alexander Abernathy (1860) on “Fellowship.”

In publishing these letters Major Graham has rendered a great service for he has preserved in the best possible way an indisputable indication of the ability, loyalty to Baptist principles, and aggressiveness of some leaders of the Baptists in those early days in determination to win the people of the section extending from Charlotte westward through Lincolnton, Newton, Hickory, and Morganton, to a knowledge of the truth as Baptists believe it.

The circular letter prepared in 1851 for the Catawba River Association by Elder Thomas Carlton, had the purpose of showing the inconsistency of other denominations in seeking to discredit Baptists because they would not invite Christians of all denominations to partake of the Lord's Supper with them. In simple language, which could

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<sup>23</sup> Pages 85-104.

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be easily understood by the unlettered, and in a vigorous and effective manner, he calls Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists to account, and quotes their own books of Discipline and the Book of Common Prayer, and other publications, which show that by profession if not by practice the accusers of the Baptists placed strong restrictions on admission to the communion table.<sup>24</sup> In the preceding year

<sup>24</sup> A few extracts will indicate the character of the letter:

"We, as a denomination, by all pedobaptists are vehemently accused of the crime of close communion, viz: of not communing with, nor admitting pedobaptists to commune with us. They say that we are 'narrow, contracted, and tacitly accuse all denominations but ourselves as anti-Christian.' And some of our own denomination are not well satisfied on this subject. To answer these objections and present this long agitated subject in its true light, will be the object of this short epistle. . . .

"Query.—Do the Pedobaptists permit unbaptized persons to approach the Lord's Table and partake of the Eucharist? None, we presume, will pretend to say they do. 'Oh sirs, you hold close communion too. Do you with all your boasted charity ever invite Quakers to commune with you?' No. Why? Because they are not baptized at all. . . .

"Will Presbyterians with these avowed principles and hundreds of others of a like nature, that might be adverted to, charge upon the Baptists the crime of close communion? If you do, we say, 'Physician heal thyself.'

"The Protestant Episcopal Church, by its peculiar view, render it close communion. They contend for apostolic succession as essential to the gospel ministry; will not recognize men who are out of that line as ministers of the gospel, and therefore duly qualified to administer the ordinances of the church. With these views, which the whole P. E. Church entertain, no intelligent member or minister of that communion will any more receive the ordinances from the hands of Presbyterian, Methodist or Baptist ministers than they would from the hands of a layman. But though they may not deem it consistent to come to the Presbyterian or Methodist communion table, yet they will condescend to allow them to come to theirs after the elements have been consecrated by the hands of one of the regular descendants in the line from St. Peter. And yet, by this great condescension, they exhibit their inconsistency by departing from their own laws, as will appear by reference to the Book of Common Prayer, under 'Confirmation.' It reads thus:—'and there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such times as he be confirmed, or be ready, or be desirous to be confirmed.' Of course, they cannot admit, according to this law, any but Roman Catholics, and such as have confirmation like themselves. As for Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists, should they desire such a privilege, they must all stand aside; because none of these denominations either desire, practice or believe in confirmation. With close communion laws, we ask how can the P. E. Church be open communionists. They cannot be open communionists with these laws and their refusal to reciprocate the courtesies of other denominations by sitting down with them at their table and thereby recognizing them as churches of Christ and their pastors as his accredited and authorized ministers.

"Will Episcopalians with these acts staring them in the face cry out against the Baptists: 'Close Communion?' If you do we say: 'Cast first the beam out of thine own eye and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote

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the subject had been treated in a letter written for the Broad River Association by Thomas Curtis, who said in part:

. . . We cannot admit the unbaptized, as we regard them, to the Lord's Table, because the fair construction of our Lord's commission and the practice of the Apostles alike forbid it.

(i.) Christ requires the unbaptized, though a believer and because he is a believer, first of all things to be baptized. The command to teach and baptize, in His commission involves, of course, the corresponding duties among our people of learning and being baptized. It prescribes also the order in which these duties are to be performed. Ministers are to teach so as to make disciples. 2d. Baptize. 3d. Then to teach all other things commanded by Christ. . . . Robert Hall, the great modern advocate of mixed communion . . . says that baptism possesses a prior claim to the attention of the christian convert, and that to receive the Lord's Supper before baptism, is to invert (we should say pervert) the natural order of His Sacraments; at least none such will we obey.

(ii.) The undisputed examples or conduct of the Apostles and primitive churches, . . . point in this same direction. Wherever the christian ordinances are spoken of together, and men's first belief of the whole—they believed, were baptized and continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. Such is the account of the Pentecostal season of the gathering of the Samaritan church, of the baptism of Paul, and of his labors at Corinth and at Thessalonica. The only point in question seems to be whether the New Testament doctrine and examples are sufficient and binding authority in the case. So say strict Baptists, and therefore so much they act. The examples of the Apostles and the first churches are at once a vital branch of all that is authority here, and the best possible comment on what they understood our Saviour's commission to mean. . . .

But the tendency of administering the Lord's Supper to (the) baptized and unbaptized indifferently, is to the extinction of believers' baptism, and indeed of all baptism. This may readily be made apparent. Establish a right of the unbaptized to the Lord's Table, and you establish their right to every privilege of God's house. What can you consistently withhold? and ponder the terms on which you do this. These two are the only positive institutions

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out of thy brother's eye.' We have shown fairly that though the Episcopalians will break their own rules to allow persons who neither practice nor believe in confirmation to come to the Lord's Table with them, yet they will not reciprocate by receiving the elements from what they deem unconsecrated hands."



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or ordinances of the church, in natural order, as all hold baptism is first. It must come in there, or you can require it nowhere. But this ordinance you now agree to pass unnoticed, and institute an acknowl(edg)ed christian church or organized society without baptism. For peace sake there must be, in such a society, a dead acquiescence in utter silence, or endless disputations on this subject. Half or three-fourths of the church may, consistently with this system, be proved Pedo-Baptists. On its introduction the barrier of baptism must be broken down. It is not a legitimate fence of Christ's fold, but a wall of Jewish exclusiveness; as a law of God's house it may be, by individuals, for awhile, acknowledged, but happily, disobedience has no penalty! Was such a law ever long respected?

In fine, here is a christian community holding as a whole, and as such, with no baptism,—and yet in its component parts with every variety of baptism, or just with baptism enough to destroy the whole doctrine of baptism. The Pedo-Baptists cannot, in charity, enforce their views, nor the Baptists theirs. The church, endeavoring to include both parties, has silenced both—each in the act of their charitable embrace, while disarming an opponent, has stultified itself, and all God's counsel on the subject of baptism is sealed up, on the peril of every old charge of sectarianism and bigotry being renewed. Beguiled by the shadow of an unity of profession this community, surely like the animal in the fable, has dropped the children's meat in this ordinance forever. While such a compromise should last it would be a church acknowledging no baptism, neither that of infants nor believers. In many cases believers' baptism would be discontinued, accession to the church not requiring it. It would go first. But who that loves consistency can, in either view of the ordinance, desire to live under such a system? Or who would, by means of such a system, seek such a result as this? Not a single good man, as we believe, with his eyes open.

Elder Robert Bruington Jones, a native of Person County, was the author of the circular letter for 1854 found in Graham's history. He had been a student at Wake Forest College, but his studies were interrupted by ill health. He had come to this section in 1851 as a missionary of the Baptist State Convention and was instrumental in the establishment of the Beulah Baptist Church at Charlotte. The subject of Elder Jones' letter was "The Design of the Church Organization." It was a well ordered and powerful

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argument, in excellent English style, for the support of missions.<sup>25</sup>

The third letter preserved by Graham was that prepared for the Association in 1860 on "Fellowship" by Elder Alexander Abernathy, a native of this section, born March 13, 1790, at Mountain Shoals on the Catawba, but going with his father, seemingly a Methodist circuit-rider, and his family to several homes in Lincoln and Rutherford counties. According to Graham's sketch,<sup>26</sup> "At the age of 22 years he joined the Methodist society and shortly after professed religion and was licensed to preach. After laboring with the Methodists several years, he and his wife obtained a letter of dismission and returned to Burke County, near his last residence. Shortly after this he joined the Baptist church. His membership was in Union Church till his death. Elder Abernathy was baptized by Hosea Holcombe on the 26th of April, 1817; and was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry by Drury Dobbins and Hosea Holcombe.

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<sup>25</sup> Its character is indicated in the following extract:

"Dear Brethren, we live in an eventful age, which greatly increases our responsibility. Each individual can and should do something. He that is engaged in spreading the gospel, either by preaching it himself or supporting those who do, is engaged in a good work, is a benefactor to his race, and will be found in the end not to have lived in vain by using his influence in accomplishing the design of the church organization.

"As Christians our labors should be brought to bear upon the immortal destiny of our race. What but the gospel can effect that change on man's heart which makes him meet for heaven?

"Our predecessors, feeling the responsibility resting on them, founded organizations in the church for the diffusion of truth. These, as a rich legacy are bequeathed unto us, their children. The great design of these organizations is to unite the strength of the church, that with combined effort she may attack the citadels of the Prince of Darkness. 'In union there is strength.' Permit us, therefore, to call your attention to our missionary organizations, home and foreign. In view of the great destitution that exists within the bounds of our Association who will dare say, 'I am opposed to Home Missions.' Are there not many within our bounds who never heard a Baptist preach? But there are some who say they like the missionary enterprise, but dislike the present system. Do such persons think to shelter their slothfulness under such a shallow pretense? If they are opposed to the plan now in operation, let them suggest a better. We are ready to adopt it."

<sup>26</sup> *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 58.

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He labored in that work from his ordination till his death. He was a faithful minister and in full fellowship with the church and much loved by all ministers and brethren with whom he mingled and was acquainted."

Elder Abernathy's circular letter, a discussion of Christian Fellowship based on scriptural quotations, well justifies the statement of Graham that "the ability with which the doctrines of the Bible were explained and disseminated is remarkable." The argument is that only those who have become disciples of Christ by repentance and faith can enjoy true Christian fellowship. Speaking of those admitted to the church at Pentecost, Elder Abernathy says:

If the Apostles were commanded or had any right to open the doors of the church as wide as the world, now was the time to invite everybody in. The twelve Apostles and the church, together with thousands of people deeply affected, were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Why then did not the preacher cry aloud and say: "Come every one of you, you ought all to join the church"? We hear no such trash from Peter, but he told them to repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins, and that they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. They gladly received the Word, and were added to the church three thousand souls who were baptized into the fellowship of the church.

The letter concludes:

We have thus in our poor feeble manner set before you, dear brethren, some of the things in which fellowship consists. Let us, in conclusion, ask whether we have true fellowship with God or not. The blessed Jesus tells us in few words who it is that have fellowship with God. "As thou has given Him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to us as many as Thou has given Him, and this is life eternal; that they may know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." John xvii, 2. 3. We see here plainly who it is that have fellowship—those who belong to Jesus, and are taught by Him in regard to fellowship in the church, when enjoyed upon the pure principle of the Gospel. It insures a full exercise of all the graces of the Holy Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. Gal. v, 22-23.

By way of conclusion, we refer you to a few words of the Beloved

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Disciple. He says: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son, Jesus Christ."

It is to be observed that these letters reveal that while interest in essential Baptist doctrines continued, a new interest in Missions had come, and a greater proportion of the letters were in the nature of essays on such subjects as prayer, Christian love, and Election.

Another of the abler writers was Elder A. J. Cansler who, during his ministry, baptized over three thousand persons.<sup>27</sup> Logan reproduces a circular letter he prepared for the Broad River Association in 1854 on "Fellowship of Churches,"<sup>28</sup> and says of his King's Mountain letter on the Lord's Supper that it "is a very elaborate and comprehensive document and worthy of preservation."<sup>29</sup> Still another able writer was Elder Larkin M. Berry.<sup>30</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup> Graham, *History of the South Fork Baptist Association*, p. 80. Cansler was a graduate of the University of North Carolina in the class of 1847. Designed by his father for the law, his whole life was changed when on September 7, 1847, he married Miss Mary Ann Martin of Wilkes County, "an amiable and accomplished lady and devoted Christian." (Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 283.) Being converted he was baptized by Elder Wade Hill; he labored in three associations, the Broad River until 1856; in the King's Mountain until 1860, and then in the Catawba River until 1867, when he moved to Arkansas, where he died in 1872.

<sup>28</sup> *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 283.

<sup>29</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 283.

<sup>30</sup> Logan, *Sketches, Historical and Biographical, of the Broad River and King's Mountain Baptist Associations, from 1800 to 1882*, p. 262: "Elder Larkin Merte Berry is a native of Buncombe county, N. C. Came to the King's Mountain Association as a delegate from the newly constituted church at Lincolnton, N. C., in 1859; was at that time an energetic agent for Dr. Sumner's (Home Missions) Board, at Marion, Alabama. He continued to represent the Lincolnton church until about 1867, when he moved away. During elder Berry's stay with the King's Mountain body, he became popular and useful as a preacher, and was frequently put forward to defend the peculiar tenets of the Baptists. He was fond of polemics; and was a fearless and able debater. He was more than once honored with the appointment of moderator of the body, and presided with efficiency and dignity. At the boisterous session in 1860 at High Shoals church, when the division of the body took place by reason of the adoption of a resolution



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following is from Berry's letter of 1860 prepared for the King's Mountain Association in which he writes on the thesis that though no express mention of associations is found in the New Testament, "yet many things pertaining to the establishment and propagation of Christianity are of necessity to be settled by time and circumstances; in a word, by expediency." Among things so settled have been the use of houses of worship, publication of periodicals, translations of the Holy Scriptures, the making of pools for baptism by damming up of creeks and branches as is sometimes necessary "in order to baptize those who believe through the preaching of the pure gospel." He continues:

Then we maintain the churches have a right to organize themselves into associate bodies to carry out the commission of Christ, on the ground of expediency. The fact is, if churches are authorized to do anything for the promotion of christianity, they are authorized to use combined effort, provided no law of Christ be violated; and we maintain that none is violated in the organization of an Association, provided such bodies do not attempt to act beyond their proper sphere, or assume powers properly belonging to the churches in a church capacity only. The question then arises, what is, and what is not the legitimate work of Associations? We maintain, the proper work of an Association is to strive for "unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace" amongst the churches; the employment and sustaining of missionaries in destitute fields; to keep up our statistical accounts; to concentrate our efforts together for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth, and for the deposition of the works of darkness, and finally, to "provoke one another to love and good works."

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the previous year on the subject of Temperance, he was then acting moderator, and displayed a great deal of parliamentary tact in his rulings, and proved equal to the emergency. He was an acceptable preacher, having a clear shrill feminine voice, and very good articulation. He had an excellent wife and a family of several children. . . . He removed (it is said) from here to St. Louis, Missouri."

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## XXXII

### CIRCULAR LETTERS—CHOWAN

The character of the circular letters differed in the several associations, being modified by several influences, historical, regional, educational, social, religious progress, and the peculiar problems of each. Thus the letters of the Chowan Association with its churches in the oldest settled section and its people in easy communication with the other sections of the country, differed much from the letters of churches west and south of the Catawba, where the settlements were much later and scattered and remote. The Baptists of the west needed instruction on how to constitute a Baptist church, who should be admitted to membership, what officers to elect, what were the duties of deacons, what were the duties and qualifications of ministers and how to go about calling them; like church members generally in all parts of the state, they also needed to be warned of the dangers of strong drink and of the grosser sins of immorality, and to be urged to exercise proper discipline. Furthermore, they needed to be grounded in the faith, instructed in the doctrines of law and grace and warned of the seductive dangers of doctrines they did not accept. Again, the members of Baptist churches should be well instructed in the peculiar Baptist views on baptism and the Lord's Supper, and ready to meet and confute any and all who spoke against them. It was these practical subjects that the writers of circular letters most often

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brought before the associations in the western part of the state, while they did not altogether neglect more general topics and the Christian virtues and graces.

In the Chowan Association the circular letters on such practical matters as intemperance and organization of churches and duties of deacons are relatively rare, and the writers much more often devote their letters to the discussion of Christian graces and virtues, doctrines, and sometimes write elaborate essays on such subjects as the "Immutability of God," and "Coldness and Lukewarmness," which, however, were of much interest and excellence. A more detailed account follows:

The first circular letter of the Chowan Association was read at the organization session, that of 1806. Its writer was Elder Lemuel Burkitt. In his introduction he calls attention to the fact that circular letters are an inheritance, and he expresses the hope that they "will continue to be a source of information and edification for your religious improvement." And he continues:

The important and melancholy subject to which we shall call your attention at this time is the *State of a Christian Backslider*. It is a fact too demonstrably true to be denied, that many professors of religion (and real Christians too) have, and may leave, in a measure their first love, and through the imbecility of human nature, and the allurements of the world, in conjunction with the temptations of the Devil, fall into a supine or lethargic state, so as to be denominated a *Backslider*. This is demonstrated in the case of David, Solomon, Peter, and many others. Yea, the exalted Redeemer commanded his servant John to enter a charge against six churches out of seven for errors, some in their tenets, others in practice.

To elucidate the subject in a concise way, we shall first note a few of the signs of a *Backslider*. Secondly the awful consequences that follow. Thirdly and lastly, some motives for a reclamation.

There follows, in clear and easily understood language, not so much a circular letter, as a short and powerful sermon of a great preacher and evangelist, such as Burkitt was.

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Elder Burkitt had little time for preparing this first letter, and seemingly desiring to have from him one which he had the usual time to prepare, the Association asked him to write that for the next year, 1807. In response Elder Burkitt prepared a letter of normal length on the subject of Patience, which well illustrates his extraordinary ability as a thinker and writer, his skill in definition and analysis and in keeping his discussion in the range of the reader's understanding, and his faculty of keeping the reader with him all the way and ready at the end to heed his exhortation, for even in a circular letter Burkitt could not escape being a preacher. In beginning his letter, after stating some characteristics of patience he gives the following definition: "Patience consists in bearing affliction without murmuring, enduring injuries without revenge, and in waiting for suspended favors till God sees meet to bestow them." The entire treatment is in accord with the estimate of his ability prepared by Elders Richard Poindexter, Aaron Spivey and James Ross, and found in the brief biographical sketch in the minutes of the next year, 1808: "He was a man of strong mind, well acquainted with men and things, a close reasoner, and was remarkably methodical in the arrangement of his discourses."

The letter of 1808 was by Elder James Ross; its subject is "Watchfulness." The writer makes it brief and simple. After giving the Scripture verses in which watchfulness is enjoined, he argues that Christians should watch (1) *against* the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and also "the smoke of the Pit," to each of which he devotes a brief paragraph; and (2) watch *for* opportunities to perform such duties as are enjoined in the New Testament, which are not definitely indicated. On the whole the treatment is too brief for adequate development of the subject. Elder James Ross wrote no other circular letters, but being appointed in 1831 to prepare the letter for 1832, he did not attend the Associa-



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tion of that year and recommended instead a published article, which, however, a committee thought too long.

Elder Martin Ross, appointed to write the letter for 1809 continued the discussion of "Watchfulness," commenting that "a subject of such magnitude and copiousness as this could not be discussed fully in the narrow bounds of a Circular Letter." He would, therefore, consider the letter of last year as an introduction, with the enlargement of subject to read "Watch and remember." (Acts 20:31.) A minute reads: "The committee appointed to examine the Circular Letter prepared by Elder Martin Ross reported the same as *a most valuable gospel depository*, which being read was received without amendment." It is indeed valuable, since it reveals better perhaps than any other production of Martin Ross the quality of his mind and the secret of his power and influence as a minister of the Gospel. The following extracts reveal something of its nature and method of treatment:

Now it is essentially necessary in order to have a right knowledge of divine truth for us to have a right disposition of heart towards the most high God. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant." Psal. 25, 14. "His secret is with the Righteous." Pro. 3, 32. That our heart enmity against the Divine Majesty is the ground and cause of moral blindness and mental darkness, is by our blessed Lord laid down as a fact not to be controverted. John 7, 17. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." This wrong disposition of heart toward God, which the scriptures charge upon all mankind indefinitely, is the cause of our shame, our guilt, misery and our ruin. A right disposition of heart, (and this is given in regeneration) draws the mind to God; it is the life of God in the soul. The divine nature is communicated, and the immortal powers enlisted in the cause of God and truth.

Characters, such as these, are in the words before us charged, most solemnly charged, to Watch and Remember. Bear with us, brethren, while we proceed to distribute our advice to you, and to our own hearts on this awful and interesting subject. *Watch* against a spirit of dogmatical arrogance and bigotry; *remember* you are far from infallibility, or perfection in knowledge; and others have

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an equal right or private judgment with yourselves. . . . *Watch* against a spirit of boundless curiosity, and a fond love of novelty; *remember* you are warned not to affect to be wise above what is written; but at the same time, *watch* against a lazy indifference to a progressive acquaintance with the things of God, and *remember* that the Bible contains an unexhausted mine of religious knowledge, which you have not yet explored.

In like manner, Ross proceeds to discuss other matters of general religious concern, on which he believed the members of the churches of the Chowan Association might profit from his words of warning, advice and instruction. In addition to the three topics already discussed, he goes on to warn against all notions which flatter human pride and encourage the idea of merit in a sinner; sentiments that encourage licentiousness or sloth; every thought that would oppose God's moral government and make void his law, and militate against the idea of the sovereign freeness of grace; degrading ideas of the person of Christ, and his atoning sacrifice; the denial of the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit; the abuse of important doctrines; sentiments that lessen abhorrence of sin, prevent holy joy in God, and tend to make one careless of his moral conduct; failure to watch one's own heart—hypocrisy, self-deception, self-righteousness, formality, want of proportion in views of divine things; defects in Christian development, backsliding, degeneracy, tending to result in falling into scandalous immorality; watchfulness over the whole tenor of our lives, and control of tempers, appetites and passions, and in particular over indulgence in appetite for spirituous liquors, in which "Old men are in most danger"; a loquacious spirit—a great talker is a great danger—and a contentious spirit—the bane of society, whether civil or religious; envies and jealousies; interference in other men's affairs, tale-bearers, peace-makers; an unforgiving spirit; provoking language, a touchy disposition.

The letter is wonderful for its wealth of ideas; from it

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one might almost make a complete catalogue of sins, weaknesses, frailties of members of churches of Ross's day and of ours, and be taught how to avoid them. Ross was not content to speak only to laymen; he had a special word for the ministers who preached for the churches of the Association. In 1791, while a minister of the Kehukee Association, his great life passion, that North Carolina Baptists should have able ministers, was already manifest in his circular letter of that year. After eighteen years that passion was stronger and was to continue eighteen years longer until he was assured that by plans of his devising a college would be established which would make proper provision for ministerial education. In 1809 there was no college, and Ross used his circular letter to give ministers much needed instruction, closing with these words:

Before we conclude, we beg leave to say a word to the Ministers of Christ among you, both old and young. And to these with great affection we would recommend a particular attention to the character of Apollos. . . .

The dear Ministers will observe in the first place, that Apollos was *instructed in the way of the Lord*. 'Tis the great work of a Minister to teach men, but particularly to teach men the way of the Lord; and Ministers therefore should be well instructed themselves in the way of the Lord. You are to feed the flock with knowledge and understanding. It is therefore essentially necessary for you to be blessed with knowledge and understanding yourselves. "Such as I have I give unto thee." But that which you have not you cannot give. O Brethren, give yourselves to reading, and to be like Apollos, *mighty in the Scriptures*. Where is the man who has dived so far in them, as that he can go no farther?—Many have said respecting the knowledge necessary or useful to a Minister, *The spirit of God needs none of man's learning*—with much greater truth and propriety it may be said, *the spirit of God needs no man's ignorance*. Knowledge, brethren, sound gospel knowledge, is what is necessary; noise and rant may set the world a gazing, but divine truth—it is the mighty force of divine truth that turns souls to God.—What Apollos knew he taught, what he did not know he was willing to learn, yea, he discovers his thirst for knowledge in his humbly sitting as a learner at the feet of a tent-maker and his wife.

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*He was fervent in spirit.* He had heat as well as light. An intemperate zeal, which has been so baneful to true religion, is by all to be guarded against; but we would recommend a lively and prosperous religion in your own souls—if not fervent Christians, not likely to be fervent Ministers. Let fair reverence of divine things be equal to your fervor. We greatly dislike that kind of preaching which tends to make men laugh. A judicious, humble, affectionate zeal is absolutely necessary to a successful minister, and nothing but this will enable him to persevere through the many difficulties in his way.

*He taught diligently the things which he heard.* An idle, wicked Minister is of all men the most useless and abominable. . . .

*Show yourselves workmen,* guard against a random, lazy, and flimsy kind of preaching. Let your subjects be *fathomed*, not skimmed; *discussed*, not merely proposed; preach not only what is according to the analogy of faith, or what may be said in general, but what belongs to your particular text. Take heed lest your discourses should be protracted to an unreasonable length; everything can not be comprised in the compass of one sermon. Among other things study to take a short, clear view of your subject. Speak in an audible, grave and serious manner—borrow no man's voice, tone or gesture. Be careful in the choice of your companions. A man's associates soon give a cast to his deportment. You may as well expect to take fire in your bosoms, and not be burned, as to associate with the immoral and profane and not become trifling in your conduct, and embarrassed in your preaching. "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

And now by way of conclusion, we earnestly entreat you one and all, to *watch and remember*, to *watch and be sober* and to *watch and pray*. Be incessant in your prayers. Go to God with enlarged hearts, full of mighty desires. "Open your mouths wide, and God will fill them."

In 1810 Elder James Wright prepared the circular letter on Intemperance, and it is among the best of those written on that subject, and of no little historic value in portraying many characteristics of the daily life of the times. He speaks of the "dreadful torrent of Intemperance" which was drawing thousands into its vortex. By intemperance he means "any excess in the exercise of the powers and passions of our minds, and of the organs, appetites and faculties of our bodies, and the inordinate use of the creatures which God has given us." There is no hiding the fact if we are



intemperate in such matters. We should avoid impairing our health by working beyond our strength in our daily occupations, but on the other hand, we think it no less an evil to be too indolent. The writer has seen some who profess to be religious "slumbering away their precious morning," while their children and servants (slaves) were in the field at work. "And it may not be amiss to remind our ministering brethren who travel to preach the gospel of the blessed Jesus and should be exemplary in their conduct, that it must be a bitter thing to the laboring poor to neglect his business and send his children and servants (if he has them) to their labor, while the preacher indulges himself in slumbering away the precious hours of morning, which should be devoted to worship." The writer goes on to say:

Intemperance is notoriously evident in the immoderate use of spirituous liquors. . . . With what grief and shame have we looked upon many who have fallen victims to this prevalent evil. . . . We acknowledge with grief that we fear there be many who think more of their morning dram than they do of the morning sacrifices and prayers. . . . Our idea of Intemperance also comprehends the excess which is too common among many with regard to food. You need not be told that this is prohibited in the sacred volume of inspiration, nor that it is productive of some of the most injurious effects on the human system. Nor need we mention that thereby the body becomes pained, and a burden to itself; sinks into sluggishness, dullness and inactivity. O may we be guarded against this evil and watch against the sins which most easily beset us. . . . Intemperance in the mind will discover itself in the apparel we wear, as well as in the food we eat. The raiment is often an index to the heart. Gaudiness and superfluity in dress, which too often appear in both sexes, shew the vanity, pride and wantonness which remains in the heart; we believe the admirers of superfluous apparel, without reserve, are unstable, and ungovernable in their desires, roving from fashion to fashion in restless circles, meeting with disappointment and confusion, while they are apt to look down with a contemptuous sneer at such who will not follow and join them in their extravagancies; and if a pious lover of modesty, of God and religion will be so faithful as to tell them of their faults, with what earnestness will they endeavor to palliate and extenuate them, and to secure themselves within the garrison of self-flattery.

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. . . Lastly. We would name some of the symptoms of this raging and too prevalent evil; among which are coldness and backwardness in attending the place of worship, and when there, so filled with worldly concerns, that there is neither time nor heart to sing a psalm, a hymn, or a divine song, yet time enough to discourse together about the fields, farms, and the seasons, both before and after preaching, to this we may add, that novelty which is pleased only with strange preachers, or men of extraordinary talents, thus treating their stated minister with coolness. . . .

Elder Wright also wrote the circular letters in 1814—on Practical Religion; 1821—on Immutability of God; and 1829—on Open and Close Communion. In the letter of 1814, Practical Religion, Elder Wright discussed prayer, the duty of parents to instruct their families in religion, praise and prayers in family and church worship, observance of the Christian sabbath—Sunday, or the Lord's Day—brotherly kindness. His letter of 1821 consists for the most part of quotations from the Scriptures to support the thesis that God is unchangeable in his nature and attributes. The letter of 1829 is a brief but well ordered argument for the Baptist position on the Lord's Supper, with special emphasis on the thesis that "If Christians unite in full communion, it must be on the pure principles of the word of God, and not upon mere fancies, desires, feelings or inclinations, for 'Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it'."

The letter of 1811 was prepared by the able Elder Richard Poindexter, who after the death of Elder Lemuel Burkitt, November 5, 1807, succeeded him as pastor of the Bertie (Sandy Run) Church, and was a delegate from that church in 1809. He wrote on Sanctification, an instructive letter, simple and well ordered, in which he maintained that sanctification was not of the body but of the soul and was bestowed at the time of conversion.

The letter of 1813 was by a layman, Brother James Woodberry, whose subject as stated in the opening sentence

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was: "The excellency of the religion of Jesus Christ; its spread and influence, and the means by which it is to be advanced." Its interest is chiefly in missions and for that reason it is historical. Already, early in May, 1813, a year before the organization of the General Baptist Convention at Philadelphia, the Chowan Association was listening to this letter by a layman which reveals that a spirit of progress and interest in world-wide missions and ministerial education was moving among the Baptists of Eastern North Carolina and exciting the enthusiasm of even its laymen. Something of the nature and extent of this interest and enthusiasm may be seen in the following extracts from Woodberry's letter:

In the day in which we live, the excellent religion of Jesus and the savour of his name (has) spread almost from one end of the earth to the other—and we conclude the time is not far distant, when the "knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth." Missionary Societies are formed, and Missionaries encouraged in the work of the Lord. The Holy Bible is sent to the heathen, and much good is done in the name and by the power of the Lord. The true religion of the Messiah, is no longer confined to *the limits of* civilized nations; it has one extensive spread through the world.

America has been a Theatre on which God, has exhibited a multitude of the special acts of his grace. Souls have been redeemed, by the blood of the Lamb—churches have been organized—associations formed, and schools of learning established for the instruction of pious young men designed for the Gospel Ministry:—so greatly has truth beamed upon our land, the intelligence of which, from time to time, has made us rejoice in the God of our Salvation. . . .

Be careful, brethren to foster the "gifts" bestowed by the "Father of lights" upon your churches; many a valuable gift has to all intents and purposes been abused and misimproved through the inattention of churches and individuals. We mean the gifts of prayer, exhortation, preaching the word, &c. Young brethren are emboldened in the good cause when they have the due approbation of their brethren, and disheartened when they do not. Whilst you enjoy religion in your own breasts, try to benefit your fellow-creatures with it; your families, neighborhood, and churches have an indisputable claim to your usefulness; pray much for the enlargement of Zion, particularly for missionaries and all others laboring in the vineyard of the Lord. Your brethren who are preaching in heathen lands, are men of

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prayer, it is their delight; and they rejoice in spirit believing that solemn prayer is made to Almighty God on their behalf that he would be pleased to reveal his omnipotent arm and crown their labors with abundant success.

There is one thing more brethren to which we solicit attention and patronage: recollect a foreign mission cannot be carried on without great expense, and it is high time you should awake to its importance, and give some pecuniary assistance to an institution in India; calculated to extend the word of life and salvation to millions of the human family, which have for centuries of nights been enveloped in gross darkness and painful delusions. Much has been already done in Europe and America by pious people, to aid our excellent brethren to carry on the translations of the Holy Scriptures: translations as important to the Hindoos and other inhabitants of India as the English translation is to the inhabitants of our country. We may add that, from actual intelligence, the nations of the East are anxious to obtain what multitudes with us despise. How important the trust, which we sustain by our Christian life? To be workers together with God! How emphatic that expression of our Lord? "Occupy until I come."—Your gospel liberality, brethren, will not be in vain. . . . We have intelligence from India as late as the 20th of last October, which we may name for your encouragement; at that time the translations were going on with uncommon speed; there were fifteen preachers from amongst the native converts employed in preaching the Gospel, and ten others who pray and exhort. The Rev. Mr. Judson & Rev. Mr. Rice, missionaries from this country, since crossing the great ocean have been baptized by Dr. Carey in the River Ganges. A spirit of inquiry concerning our sentiments is rapidly spreading through the world; and may you, dear brethren, be as ready to do, as others are to inquire.

Being appointed to prepare the circular letter of 1815 on any religious subject he might choose, Elder Aaron Spivey, the loved and devoted minister of the Cashie Church, wrote a short and simple exposition of the text, I Thessalonians V: 18, "In everything give thanks." The letter of 1816, by Brother John Wheeler of Meherrin Church, who also had the freedom of choosing his subject, was an encomium on the "Holy Bible." In 1817, no provision having been made for the preparation of a letter, on the recommendation of a committee, the circular letter of the Charleston Association of 1809, "On the Duty of Observing the



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Christian Sabbath," was published. It argues at considerable length for such observance as was general with Protestants of all denominations in the southern states in the nineteenth century.

In 1818 the circular letter was prepared by Elder Benjamin F. Farnsworth, who had first appeared at the session of the Association of 1817 as a delegate of the newly constituted church at Edenton, which was admitted to the body that year, and for two years was prominent in the meetings. His subject was "Works of Faith." Few better circular letters have ever been written. "True religion is attested by its fruits," is its first sentence, and its general nature is indicated by this further prefatory statement:

A peculiarity of our holy religion is, that it consists not in a profession of faith, but in a personal renovation and growth of holy affections. By nature men are found depraved; but a genuine faith adds virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and charity. So opposite are these to their natural dispositions, that such as are possessed of them are said to be born again and to be new creatures. It is but rational to expect some external distinction between them and others. Favored with the high appellation of children of God, were a mark to be set in their forehead, some would think a proper method employed to make known this happy generation in the skies. But another direction is given—by their fruits ye shall know them—they are holy, undefiled and separate from sinners, bearing in their life a near resemblance to the author and finisher of their faith; as he was, so are they the light of the world. The justice, the meekness, and the benevolence of Jesus is portrayed in their actions, and recommended by their words.

The letter of 1819 was by Elder Thomas Billings, who seemingly had not attended any previous session of the Association, but is named as a delegate from the Edenton Church in 1819. However, in the minutes of 1818 we find that it was "agreed to request Elder Thomas Billings and Brother Thomas Brownrigg to prepare a circular letter to be annexed to the minutes of our next association." This letter was written by Elder Billings alone and after being

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examined by Elders Martin Ross and Aaron Spivey, was "read, approbated and received." Its subject was "The Essential Qualifications of a Christian Minister," and it would compare favorably with any other discussion of this important matter ever written. Although it was adapted to the time, it might with profit be republished as a tract and circulated among the Baptist churches of today. "Although," says the writer, "we cannot in a circular address, exhibit to your view a full portrait of an ambassador of the Son of God, yet the essentials seem to be 1st. Holiness of Heart; 2nd. A suitable capacity, and 3rd. A divine appointment."

Like Farnsworth, Billings did not long continue in the Chowan Association, his name last appearing in the minutes of 1821.

In 1820, a committee appointed to examine the circular letter reported that they had found none, "owing to the indisposition of Elder Thomas Meredith, who was appointed to write." Meredith's name first appears in the minutes for 1818, when he was Assistant Clerk, and one of the three ministers appointed to preach on the Sabbath. In 1819 he was one of the delegates from the Edenton Church (the others being Elder Billings and Brother Joseph Manning), and was asked to prepare the circular letter for 1820, which, as told above, he was prevented by illness from doing. Some account of the letter of Elder James Wright in 1821 has already been given. The letter of 1822 was by Elder William J. Newbern, who was a lay delegate from Ross's Meeting House in 1814, a delegate when a licentiate from the same church in 1815, and 1816, and beginning with 1817, a delegate from the Wiccacon Church, and designated as a minister. In his circular letter he discussed "Reading or Searching the Scriptures with Diligence," and firmly maintained that the Scriptures were of divine origin, "the only proper and perfect rule of faith and practice, to which we

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must not add and from which we must not diminish on pain of having our part taken out of the book of life."

Elder Jeremiah Etheridge wrote the circular letter of 1823. The records show that he first attended a meeting of the Association in 1822, at which time he came as a delegate of the Cowenjock Church in Currituck County, although he had been named as a delegate of that church for several years earlier. At the session of 1822 he had a prominent part in the proceedings, and was appointed to write the letter of 1823. That letter, both in style and content, is among the best of its kind. The subject was "Christian Experience." "Our design," says he, "is to point out 1st, the nature of Christian experience; 2nd, The means whereby it is improved, and 3rd, some of the advantages resulting from it." The records indicate that Elder Etheridge attended only one other association, that of 1825, at which by appointment he preached the introductory sermon. He was then a delegate of the church at Elizabeth City.

For the Association of 1824, no letter had been prepared, but in its place was published a selection from *Rippon's Annual Register*, recommended by a committee of which Martin Ross was chairman. Its subject was "The Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ," which is discussed in an illuminating way. Though published in England, internal evidence indicates that it was a circular letter of an American association.

The letter for the next year, 1825, was prepared by the youthful Elder William Hill Jordan, who was a delegate from the church at Cashie in 1824, and afterwards was to attain prominence in Baptist affairs in the State. His letter was a discussion of "Spiritual-mindedness," and had the characteristics that in later years marked his numerous contributions to the *Biblical Recorder*. It showed that the writer was of considerable ability, but was much too long,

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three to five times as long as the usual letter, more than twelve thousand words, requiring several hours to read.

In 1825, "On motion of Elder Martin Ross, it was agreed that the Association appoint a committee to consider and report upon the most judicious methods of encouraging young gifts in the Church from their first exercise until the time of ordination." The committee, not having time to complete its report, asked that the subject be discussed in the circular letter of 1826, and "Elders Martin Ross, James Ross, Thomas Meredith, William J. Newbern, and James Wright were appointed to a committee to write the next circular letter according to the report." At the appointed time the committee was unprepared to make a report and was discharged, but Elder Martin Ross was asked to prepare a circular on this subject so dear to his heart, which because of his last illness he was unable to do. But in the present year, 1826, the circular letter of the Virginia Portsmouth Association was read before the Association and ordered annexed to the Minutes. The nature of this letter may be seen in its first sentence, which reads: "As the declension of vital Godliness in almost every church may be attributed either to false doctrine or false discipline, it has seemed good on this occasion to invite your particular attention to that course of church discipline which to us appears clearly pointed out in the Scriptures."

At the Association of 1827 Elder Martin Ross, though present and chosen Moderator, had been "prevented by his afflictions, age and infirmities," from writing the letter; he died before the end of the year. Ross recommended the publication of the circular letter of the Northamptonshire Association of 1801, but in its stead was published Ross's "Biographical Sketch of Brother Thomas Brownrigg," somewhat abridged and with slight additions by the clerk, Elder J. G. Hall.

In 1828, Elder James Wright did not have ready the



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letter he had been asked to prepare, and in its place was published the "Memoir of Elder Martin Ross," written by Elder Thomas Meredith on the request of the Association. It is in ornate English style, and is altogether much the best record we have of the great Baptist champion, but it omits account of many important activities of Ross's life and labors.

In 1829 Elder James Wright was ready with the letter on "Open and Close Communion," of which some account has been given above. For the Association of 1830, Elder J. G. Hall wrote the letter on "Coldness and Lukewarmness in the Duties of Religion." After the model of the sermons of the day it is developed along three heads: 1. The causes of coldness and lukewarmness. 2. The inconsistency of a cold and lukewarm spirit. 3. The means of overcoming this state of mind. The appeal is largely personal. It is interesting chiefly because it is written at the time of the spread of the paralyzing influence of the anti-missionary spirit in some of the churches of the Association.

After 1830 no circular letter was published until 1836. In these years the Association discussed reports on the State of the Churches prepared by committees appointed a year in advance.

The letter of 1836 was by Elder J. J. Finch, of the Edenton Baptist Church. It is a masterly production, and compares favorably with the best of circular letters, including those of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. Its writer, Rev. J. J. Finch, was among our ablest Baptists and distinguished both as a preacher and as an educator. He is one of the few North Carolinians whose sermons have been published in a volume and are still often read; and he was among the first to provide a school for the education of young women. In 1836 he had recently come to Edenton as pastor of the Baptist church. The contents of the letter on the subject "The Importance of Christian Union" indi-

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cate that it was written as a supreme effort of the Chowan Association Baptists to regain the harmonious co-operation of their Kehukee Association brethren. It is of the nature of a tract and seemingly to insure its wide circulation was published out of time in the Minutes of the Chowan Association. Something of its character may be inferred from the following extracts:

. . . In all our churches, in all our associations, we should have one general system of operation; to this system we should conform in sentiment, in feeling and in effort.

Until this is the case, until there is this general understanding among us, that all must act in concert, governed by the same laws, conform to the same arrangements, and direct our efforts to the same object, we shall continue to labour under those disadvantages that have long depressed our churches, and have to encounter opposition and obstacles the more dangerous and distressing because directed by those who profess to be our brethren.

It is time for Baptists to awake and consider their true interests; it is time for them to drop their little controversies, and to cease to oppose each other, and to unite in one general effort in defending the precious truths and doctrines of Christianity, and to support the bleeding cause of our Master. This is an important crisis; we live in an age remarkable for effort and invention. Every system of doctrine, every form of government, are striving for the ascendancy. At such a period, it little becomes us to be alienated and divided; seeking and making opposing parties among ourselves, when we have the opposition of so many parties to encounter out of our ranks; above all the people in the world the Baptists have the greatest reason to be united among themselves, and yet they seem to be the most divided. Beside the opposition they have to encounter from the world, on some important points in Christianity, they are opposed by the whole Christian world besides; and in general, they have less to expect from other societies than any other denomination in the world. Under these circumstances, how important it is that we be united! Our cause, tho' good, cannot prosper without attention and assistance, and it has nothing to expect beyond our own resources. Let us see to it then that these resources are employed to the best advantage unitedly for its support; unless we do, it must suffer and decline. The strongest army does not always conquer, nor does the best cause always succeed; much depends upon *management*, and especially upon being *united*! It has long since passed into a proverb that union is strength. The efforts in the

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influence of an individual are often rendered doubly strong and successful by being united with others; we all know "that an hundred individuals acting separately can each accomplish no one object beyond the strength of a single man; acting together can perform what to an individual would appear a miracle."

Where there is union, there the Spirit of the Lord will delight to dwell, and there will he bestow his blessings; but where there is discord and disunion he will not abide. . . .



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## XXXIII

### HUMPHREY POSEY AND THE CHEROKEE MISSION

Humphrey Posey must be reckoned among the ablest and most distinguished ministers who have brought the gospel of Salvation to his fellow men of two races, whites and American Indians, whether in North Carolina or any other American state. The following sketch of him is taken, somewhat abridged, from *The Story of Henderson County* by Sadie Smathers Patton:<sup>1</sup>

William Posey moved from Henry County, Va., to Cane Creek about 1785. He was of a family which had come to America with Lord Baltimore's colonists. . . .

Humphrey, (a) son, was one of the most remarkable men of his day. Born Jan. 12, 1780, he moved to Cane Creek, in what was then Burke County, when he was five years old. His mother was a devout, well read woman, who taught him the alphabet, and it is said that by the time he was seven years old, he had read the New Testament through more than once. He began teaching school when he was seventeen years old, in what he always referred to as "Old Fields" schools in Greenville District, South Carolina, and all during the time he pursued his own studies assiduously. He was a man of more than ordinary size, fair, with clear blue eyes, dignified and commanding in appearance, even during early life.

On January 28, 1800, . . . he married Miss Lettice Jolley. . . . Though his wife was not a Baptist, he united with a church of that denomination, and was baptized June 11, 1802. The church in Union granted him a license to preach during the following year.

Failing health forced him to change climate, and he returned to Buncombe County in 1804, where in that same year, he preached

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<sup>1</sup> Page 65f.



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his first sermon, thus entering upon his active career of preaching and teaching in Western North Carolina.

"In 1805, I commenced preaching of evenings in a destitute settlement near where I was teaching a school on Cane Creek. Brother James Whittaker and myself drew up Articles of Faith, . . . and we collected all the members intending to be in the constitution and examined them on the Articles. All being agreed a presbytery was invited to attend. The presbytery was pleased with our Articles of faith and so the church was organized. . . . I was ordained to the work of the ministry. At the next meeting I baptized four professed believers and the work of the Lord continued for a length of time. Some were received for baptism at almost every meeting." . . .

Humphrey Posey, in addition to his work at Cane Creek, and assisted by James Whittaker, also established a church at Locust Old Field, which was a land mark of Indian days near Canton. Old records show that Posey also preached at Bill's Creek Church in Rutherford County during the same period he was carrying on work at the other two places.

He was appointed in 1817 to take charge of work among the Cherokee Indians in Western North Carolina and the upper part of Georgia. One of the mission schools was on the site of the old Natchez town, on the north side of Hiawassee River in Cherokee County. It had been established at the insistence of Currehee Dick, a prominent mixed blooded chief, and one of its earlier principals had translated the New Testament into the Cherokee language. Founded on the beginning which was there when he went, Humphrey Posey, through his teaching, played a wonderful part in improving and educating the people, and the place, known as the "Mission School," is still outstanding in the mountains.

Posey, in later years, moved to Georgia, and there his first wife died on June 22, 1842. Two years later he married Mrs. Jane Stokes of Newnan and made his residence in that town until his death on December 22, 1846.

Posey's organization of the Cane Creek Church was characteristic of much of the work done by Baptist ministers in the pioneer days. Posey acted on his own initiative, as other Baptist ministers regularly did at that period, and some have continued to do through all the years, doing work that they saw needed to be done, which contributed largely to the progress of the Kingdom of God and in particular of the Baptists. A more recent example is the missionary work

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of J. B. Richardson and H. B. Conrad in the region of the present South Yadkin and Rowan associations. Seeing much of this section surrendered to the Pedobaptists for years, leaving their homes in High Point and Winston-Salem, they went through this section preaching to congregations wherever they could arrange for them, powerfully proclaiming the Baptist doctrine of the baptism of believers by immersion, and contributed to the result that in 1953 the South Yadkin was an association of 36 churches with 9,943 members, and Rowan an association of 32 churches with 9,844 members.

In 1805 Posey was already acquainted with the Indians and his heart went out to them, and soon after his establishment of the Cane Creek Church he was going southward through their villages and bringing them the Gospel. At Valley Towns, near the present town of Andrews, Luther Rice found him in charge of a mission school for the Cherokees in 1816-1817, and joined with him in planning for the development of that work, which was to prove the greatest ever undertaken by Posey. A further account of it follows.

In its report to the Baptist Triennial Convention in 1832, the American Baptist Board said that the Cherokee mission station at Valley Towns, North Carolina, was "the most encouraging of all under the charge of the Board, among the Indians." It was owing to the great work of this mission that Dr. Thomas Armitage in his *History of the Baptists*, published in 1887, was able to say that the Cherokees in their new home in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, might "well be considered a civilized and Christian nation." And yet in none of our histories of American Baptists is there more than a scant reference to this mission, and no writer on North Carolina Baptist history of this period has had anything to say of it. Furthermore, one who has recently labored as a missionary among the Cherokees in

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western North Carolina says that all tradition of it has perished among the Cherokees of that section themselves, who date their Baptist churches from about 1880. In 1882 they organized these churches into an association, which in 1952, according to the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* for that year, had 15 churches and 1,136 members. Yet it would be hard to find in the story of any mission accounts of wiser administration, more heroic and consecrated service, more pathetic incidents, more glorious success, more cause for joy in religion as a transforming power in the lives of men and people, than this Indian mission in North Carolina.

Though the story has never been told, materials for constructing it are to be found in some completeness in *The Latter Day Luminary*, beginning with 1818, and in the *American Baptist Magazine*, beginning with 1817, supplemented by the reports of the Board of the Baptist General Convention.

Before the end of the first quarter of the last century, after numerous wars, the Cherokees had yielded the greater part of their hunting grounds to white invaders and, numbering about 15,000, were confined for the most part to the mountains of southwestern North Carolina and contiguous states. Though no wars were longer waged against them the process of robbing them of their lands was still in progress. Sometimes they were induced to sell great tracts for a mere song, as they sold Haywood County about the year 1810, and every year adventurous and often unprincipled men were intruding into the territory reserved to the Cherokees by treaty and making their homes there. Such was the condition when the Baptists established among them the mission at Valley Towns.

This mission, as indicated above, owed its inception to two men. One was Luther Rice, whose name will always be associated with the glorious day of the first missionary

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enterprise of American Baptists. The other was Humphrey Posey. When in 1816-1817 Rice, as Agent of the Baptist General Convention, was on his journey through the South, he fell in with Posey and this matter of a mission among the Cherokees came up for discussion.

Posey was at that time in the full maturity of his wonderful powers—large in body and large in intellect and spiritual endowment, he impressed those who saw him as a giant among even the ablest Baptists of that day. From the first his heart had yearned for the salvation of the Cherokees, the “poor Cherokees,” as he always called them. Years before he saw Rice he had made several missionary journeys through their nation, but their ears were stopped by their heathen ignorance and they did not respond to his message. Now, with the help of the organized and enthusiastic Baptists of America, he saw the promise of the realization of his hope that these poor Cherokees might be led to know Jesus. Accordingly, after some correspondence with Dr. William Staughton, the General Secretary of the Board, and after two trips of inspection through the Cherokee nation, he began his work, as the regularly appointed missionary of the Board on December 1, 1817.

At this day we can hardly conceive the difficulty of the work of evangelizing these Indians. Some of them had indeed learned from the white men some of the arts of civilization, but in matters of religion most of them were benighted. The following statement from Rev. Evan Jones,<sup>2</sup> who came to the mission in 1821, will indicate how great was the darkness among them:

If some of the warm-hearted members of the Board were here to see the degraded state of these people, I think they would say that necessity was laid upon them to turn upon the wretched immortals the benign rays of the gospel of light to illuminate their darkness, and to guide their feet in the ways of peace. They are

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<sup>2</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, III, p. 312.



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altogether ignorant of God, and of the nature of their own souls. They have no idea what will become of them after death; and though they do acknowledge a Creator, they are totally unacquainted with any of his attributes; hence they have no motives to stimulate them to virtue or to deter them from vice; and their own corrupt passions are their only guide. It is impossible for any person who knows the value of the human soul not to feel his spirit stirred in him, while viewing their condition, buried in wretchedness and misery, literally without hope and without God in the world; and by many Christians given up as the irrecoverable slaves and the hopeless, helpless prey of the prince of darkness.

Already there had been some efforts to evangelize the Cherokees. For several years a Rev. Mr. Sandige, a minister and teacher supported by the Sarepta Association of Georgia, had lived among the Indians whose lands bordered on the Association, and at this time they had appointed three others to travel and preach among them. At Tinsawatee, near the boundary of Georgia and Tennessee, a Mr. O'Bryant had a school, which in 1821 had twenty-eight scholars. In addition, an establishment with great promise had been started under the patronage of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the board of the Congregational Church, which first sent Judson and Rice to India. The United Brethren, or Moravians, also had established a mission among the Cherokees under the direction of Rev. John Gambold. And it may be said here that the first converts among the Cherokees were made at the mission station of Rev. Gambold, the first of all being a woman, the niece of the able and influential chief, Charles Hicks, who also became a Christian. The Congregational missions, so far as my sources indicate, flourished greatly for a few years and then were discontinued.

Beginning his work, as we have seen, on December 1, 1817, Posey continued in it with some intermissions for four years. He made frequent missionary journeys through the villages, preached many sermons, employing an interpreter when necessary, and establishing local schools where the

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Cherokees could be taught the English language, for in no other way did he suppose the Cherokees could receive the gospel. These local schools, however, were discontinued after a few months. On his second trip through their nation, the Cherokee children were already fond of him, and he tells of a little girl, about four years old, who having seen him on his first visit, when she saw him coming, rejoiced as though he was a particular friend, telling her people who he was and saying that she was not afraid of "yunaka" that is, the white man. Though the Indians suffered much from some of the white people around them, they always looked to Posey as their friend, and received him as "one sent by the Great Spirit to instruct them."<sup>3</sup> Posey's work, however, was that of a pioneer, one who makes a survey and plans the work. With his work among the churches of the whites in western North Carolina and other engagements which carried him to other states, sometimes as far as Missouri, he soon came to see that he could not do in person work of evangelizing the Cherokees. To do this work some one was needed who could live among them.

At the time Posey was entering on the work of the mission, the Cherokees of this section were greatly disturbed over the effort to have them removed to what was later called Indian Territory. How fondly they clung to the land of their fathers may be seen in the following extracts from a letter written by that first of all Cherokee Christians, the niece of Chief Charles Hicks, of whom I spoke above, to an influential white friend at Washington. Writing in 1818, she says:<sup>4</sup>

You often write to our dear brother Gambold, and I hear that you are a true friend to the poor despised Indians. God bless and regard you for it; and grant you long life and happiness.

Now as my uncle, Ch. Hicks, is gone to Washington, to plead

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<sup>3</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, I, pp. 45, 411.

<sup>4</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, I, p. 453.

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our cause before our dear father, the President, and make our distresses known, I take the liberty to write this to you. I wish you to be on my uncle's side, if I dare ask the favor; for we poor Indians feel very much humbled.

Oh, for the sake of God's love and mercy, pity us! If we do not get help from that quarter, we are undone.

Our neighboring white people seem to aim at our destruction. They have not the fear of God before their eyes; they seem not to believe in a Saviour; they set wicked examples before the poor ignorant Indians; they insult our people, who bear it patiently. I cannot cease from weeping to our dear merciful Saviour to show mercy to us, and help us from the hand of our oppressors. We are persuaded that if our honoured father the President could see our great distress into which we are brought, he would weep over us, he would pity us, he would help us. Yet we constantly look from a distance to him for help, as poor helpless children look up to their father, crying to have pity on them.

Since I have experienced grace and mercy from my dear Saviour, and have become truly happy in him and with his children, it is my constant prayer, that my whole dear nation might enjoy the same blessings that I enjoy.

This grieves me more than I can tell, that at a time when there is a good prospect that many more will join the few who have embraced Christianity, we shall be driven away from the land of our fathers, which is as dear to us as our own lives, from our improved farms, from our beloved teachers, into a land strange to us; yea, into savage life again. Dear Sir, I declare I would prefer death to such a life again.

I have quoted rather fully to indicate the conditions under which the missionary work among the Cherokees was begun and prosecuted.

The result of the conferences with the President (Monroe) of which this pathetic letter speaks was a new treaty which prolonged the Cherokees' right to the occupation of the greater part of their lands for a few years longer. Even the part they surrendered was to be sold to the highest bidders as farm lands and the proceeds put in a trust fund for the education of the Indian children to be administered by the President. At the same time the President approved a plan for schools among the Cherokees which seems to have been made by Chief Charles Hicks with the co-operation of

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Posey. Under this plan the schools were to be something of the nature of a colony of whites in which not only the Indian children should be taught the English language and elementary subjects, but the older people should be taught blacksmithing, the operation of sawmills and grist mills and house-building.

According to the express desire of the Indians themselves, these schools were to be under the control of religious bodies. In writing of the matter from Asheville under date of May 9, 1819, Posey says: <sup>5</sup>

They wish every school to be an establishment, and the children principally to board at the place. They look to the religious societies for teachers, preachers, and farmers, as they have unanimously found out that Christians are their only friends, whose example they wish their rising generation to follow, and whose instruction they hope will prove a lasting blessing to their nation.

The American Board of Commissioners (Congregationalist), in conjunction with the United Brethren (Moravian), and the Baptist Board, are the particular sources to which they look. The two former have one establishment each, and the wish is for the next to be conducted by the Baptist Board in a part of the nation called the Valley Towns, contiguous to North Carolina, which is a very healthy, fertile place, and will be very populous.

Early in the year 1819, Posey set about making arrangements for the establishment of the school. First, he secured the unanimous consent of the General Council of the Cherokees. His next step was to go to Washington, a long journey in those days when there were no railroads. There he was most kindly received by President Monroe and Mr. John C. Calhoun, who was then Secretary of War, and secured from them endorsement of his plan. His next step was to proceed to Philadelphia and there have the plan adopted by the Baptist Mission Board, whom he found most sympathetic. The expenses of the trip amounted to \$120.

On his return Posey set about establishing the mission on the lands set apart for the purpose at Valley Towns in the

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<sup>5</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, I, p. 452.



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present county of Cherokee. He provided the farm with three horses, wagons, tools, 40 head of cattle, and about 100 hogs, and soon had about 80 acres enclosed and in cultivation. He also procured tools for carpenters and blacksmiths and began the erection of permanent buildings for the expected missionaries and for the school. All this was done at a total cost to May 16, 1821, of \$5,520.49, of which \$1,000 was contributed by the United States Government.<sup>6</sup> Writing on September 27, 1821, Posey says:<sup>7</sup>

Our school is doing very well; 40 Cherokees are still improving very fast. . . . I humbly hope day is broke in this wilderness. I have been enabled to undergo the fatigues of my situation entirely cheerful, since I understood the dear brethren and sisters were coming on this fall. Our crop looks well. We have bricks burnt and one chimney started, intending if possible to have comfortable buildings for the reception of the brethren. Our saw mill, I think, will cut plank to-morrow and our grist mill is pretty well on the way. O for a heart of thankfulness to the great Giver of all good, for his loving kindness to the children of men!

The "dear brethren and sisters" whom Posey expected were set aside for their work at Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, on September 26, 1821. The group is interesting for in it were perhaps the first women missionaries who ever labored in North Carolina.

This band consisted of the Rev. Thomas Roberts, late pastor of the Baptist Church in the Great Valley, and Elizabeth, his wife; Mr. Isaac Cleaver, blacksmith, farmer, &c. and Rachel, his wife; Mr. Evan Jones, teacher, and Elizabeth, his wife, and John Farrier, farmer and weaver. Besides these brethren and sisters, there were three excellent female teachers, Elizabeth Jones, Mary Lewis, and Ann Cleaver. The children of the missionaries are Samuel, Phineas and John Cleaver, of the several ages of 17, 15, and 12, each of whom has been brought up to farming; Thomas Roberts, of the age of 15, who had commenced the study of medicine, and John Roberts, aged 11; Elizabeth Roberts, 13, and Catherine Cleaver, 12. Nine children besides the above were under 11. The whole company is 26.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, p. 374, account of the Cherokee Mission.

<sup>7</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, p. 488.

<sup>8</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, p. 488 f.

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After they had been set apart in a meeting called "powerful and melting,"<sup>9</sup> the next morning was fixed for their departure. By appointment they met in the Central Square of the City of Philadelphia where they were met by four or five hundred brethren and sisters from the different churches. "There under the open sky, the praises of God were sung for the growth of the empire of the Messiah. The missionaries were again, by prayer, commended to God and the word of his grace, when amid a thousand wishes for their prosperity, they ascended their wagons (four in number) and departed."<sup>10</sup> As they made their way they were received as the servants of God. At Washington a member of the Cabinet showed them favors, and so did people generally all along the route. We catch a glimpse of them five miles west of New Bern, another at Knoxville, whence they made their way 90 miles back to Valley Towns. The distance of about 800 miles they made before November 23, in less than two months. Yet, though this party of 26 was on the road eight weeks, they all arrived at Valley Towns in good health, "not a person was injured, not a horse failed, nor a wagon broke down."<sup>11</sup> And so good were the people that the total cost to the Board for the traveling expense of the entire group was only \$3.64.

On their arrival at Valley Towns the company were most heartily welcomed by Posey, who immediately surrendered to them the conduct of the work. They doubtless found the plant better than they had expected, some dozen buildings grouped around a large space, dwellings, a school building, shops, mills, barns, cribs, smokehouses, and a springhouse for milk and butter, a farm of seventy acres cleared and enclosed and in a good state of cultivation, and provisions in abundance.

The school was a boarding school, in which, partly at the

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<sup>9</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, p. 489.

<sup>10</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, II, p. 489.

<sup>11</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, III, p. 91.

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expense of the Indian Fund of the National Government and partly at the expense of friends of the mission, Cherokee children gathered here and there through the nation were housed, fed, clothed, and taught the English language and elementary subjects, and the arts of civilized life. Before the northern missionaries arrived the school numbered about forty, and all were taught by one teacher, the Rev. Mr. Dawson, with the aid of the more advanced students, following what is known as the Lancasterian system. Now that the northern teachers were come, Dawson gave up the work, and the school came under the care of Rev. Evan Jones, assisted by the women teachers who had come along for the purpose. With the increased facilities the school was soon growing in numbers and in favor with the Indians. All who had to do with these children testify to their mental alertness and quickness to learn. One testimony is as follows: <sup>12</sup>

Though their skin is red, or dark, I assure you, their mental powers are white—few white children can keep pace with them in learning; and many of them can work well. They are trained not only to books, pencils and pens, but also to the hoe, the mattock, the plough, the scythe, and the sickle.

But the missionaries soon found that teaching the Indian children on the plan then followed of first teaching them the English language, very unsatisfactory. After the children had learned to write and the novelty had worn off, they would often become listless, not understanding what it was all about. Since Indian parents allow their children to do as they please, compulsion was impracticable. "The only means we have then to secure their attendance," says Mr. Jones,<sup>13</sup> "is to render our instruction interesting, and this is a very difficult task when the co-operation of the undersanding cannot be secured." Accordingly Mr. Jones,

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<sup>12</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, III, p. 91f.

<sup>13</sup> *The Latter Day Luminary*, III, p. 310.

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with the approval and co-operation of Mr. Roberts, the minister and supervisor, made a radical change, making the Indian language basic and as soon as possible giving the greater part of the instruction in that, while he and Mr. Roberts set about translating the primers and catechisms, and also parts of the New Testament, into the Cherokee language, and learned to speak the language themselves. It was doubtless this use of the Indian language in instruction and in preaching that brought this mission its great success.

As stated above, the Cherokee children were housed, fed, clothed, and taught at the mission. Mr. Posey had published a statement in which he estimated that the cost of the food was ten dollars a year per child. This led some societies to adopt each a child of its own, contributing yearly the cost of its support, ten dollars. In doing this the benefactors often claimed the privilege of giving the child the Christian name it was expected to have in addition to its Indian name. The same privilege was given those who contributed for the clothing of a child; accordingly we often find the children bearing good New England names, such as Anna Stokes, Obadiah B. Brown, and Edilin Bradford.

When they came to the school the children were for the most part naked and it was necessary to provide them with clothing. To this need great contributions were made by numerous Women's Mite or Cent Societies, which under the leadership of Luther Rice were organized all over the United States, a number of them in North Carolina. These societies, especially those in New England, but also some in the South, were every year sending boxes of clothing, blankets, etc.; sometimes as many as thirteen boxes would be found accumulated at once at Augusta, whither they had been carried by water from Boston and other places; but from Augusta to Valley Towns they were brought by wagon. How gladly these boxes were received by teachers



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and children alike is indicated in a letter of Mr. Roberts to the New York Baptist Female Society, under date of February 20, 1822.<sup>14</sup> He says:

The valuable donation of clothing which you sent to the Cherokee children has (arrived by way of Savannah) at a very seasonable time. . . . You desired to know how they suit the children. I answer, remarkably well. The poor boys feel thankful when they receive a tow cloth garment to cover their naked bodies. How much more then when they saw those sent by you, made of good cloth and karsinett. And could you have seen the grateful smiles, mingled with tears of joy on the faces of the little girls, it would have done your hearts good.

The box of which Mr. Roberts speaks was brought to Sunday school on that February morning, the coldest of the winter, and its contents shown piece by piece and distributed to the children in the presence of many of their parents. Thus, in this very practical way, the women, through their co-operative effort, were helping to win the Cherokees to Christ.

Year by year other schools were established in other parts of the Cherokee nation, but at these only instruction and shelter were furnished by the Board; the Indians themselves sent in provisions to feed the children and did all they could to help give their children an education.

It can easily be seen that these schools with children taught by Christian teachers zealously laboring to bring them to a knowledge of Jesus Christ exercised a powerful influence with both the children and their deeply interested parents. But not content with the weekday instruction, the missionaries at Valley Towns established a Sunday school early in December 1821, within two or three weeks after their arrival. It would be more nearly correct to say that the women of the mission established the Sunday school, for it was Mrs. Elizabeth Jones, wife of Rev. Evan Jones,

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<sup>14</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, III, p. 386.

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who directed it.<sup>15</sup> It is certainly among the first, if not the very first, Sunday school ever maintained in North Carolina.

Mrs. Jones continued in charge of the Sunday school until her untimely death on February 5, 1831. There, with almost no helps in the way of literature except catechisms, she carried on her great work. Just what was its nature may be seen from this description of it in the journal of her husband under date of April 22, 1827, in which he says: <sup>16</sup>

In the morning Sunday school conducted by my wife. Those who can read are required to commit to memory select passages of Scripture; to read deliberately a chapter selected the preceding sabbath, which she explains in a familiar way, and endeavors to impress its contents on their consciences. The smaller ones are employed at such things as they are capable of in their several classes. Connected with the Sabbath services, those who can read and write are required to prove some Scripture doctrine or duty, and to commit the texts to writing in the course of the week. This being the regular plan of the Sunday school I need not repeat it.

It may be said here that on August 12, 1827, the Valley Towns had a distinguished visitor, none other than the famous Professor Mitchell of the University of North Carolina, who sat on Mrs. Jones' Bible class for adults and afterwards preached from John 12:27 "a very instructive discourse."<sup>17</sup>

Along with the work in the Sunday school and the day school went the preaching of the Word, which fell altogether to Rev. Evan Jones when, after about three years, Rev. Mr. Roberts left the station. Though progress was at first

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<sup>15</sup> Here let me turn aside to say that the early Sunday schools in America seem generally, if not uniformly to have been under the direction of women. At first it seems they were regarded as too insignificant for men to pay any attention to them. It was only after the so-called Female Sabbath Schools had proved their efficiency that the men came forward to claim first place in them. It might be enlightening as to just how well they were doing this great work at the very first to read the "Report of the Directors of the Female Sabbath School of the Second Baptist Society in Boston" for the year 1821, as it appears in the *American Baptist Magazine*, III, p. 389f.

<sup>16</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, VII, p. 299.

<sup>17</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, VIII, p. 270.

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slow, it was real. The greater number of the early converts, as might be expected, was among those who had been or were then in the school. From the first religion was made a personal matter with them. The Indian boys and girls came under a deep conviction of sin, sought the Lord with earnestness and tears, and found Him with joy, and were baptized as a sign of their newness of life. A typical example is Ann Judson, her name being the Christian name some patron had given her. I copy from Mr. Jones' journal:<sup>18</sup>

*1827. Aug. 12.* This afternoon a young Catawba (Indian) girl called on an errand; my wife asked her a few questions and found her under deep conviction. She said that she had been troubled about her sins ever since I preached at Judge Walker's, from the text, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." We sung and prayed and conversed with her a good while. . . . She said but little, being overwhelmed with sorrow and weeping. We endeavored to direct her to Jesus, the sinner's only refuge.

*Aug. 19.* After preaching, Brother Brooks, a traveling evangelist, spoke very closely to Ann Judson. He was pleased with her answers, though she could do little more than weep. She said that she could not be happy without Christ.

*September 17.* Perceiving two of the girls much affected, and earnestly wishing to see the impression deepened, I told them I would converse with those who wished it, on Christian experience after worship. Four attended. And while we were thus engaged, it pleased the Lord to reveal himself to our beloved pupil Ann Judson. Her burden of guilt was gone. Jesus appeared unspeakably precious, and a new song was put into her mouth. . . . While talking to her I was interrupted by deep sobs from another girl, whom I discovered to be in an agony of distress.

*September 23.* Lord's Day. After a little rest—from the preaching service—proceeded to the river, and baptized Ann Judson, and afterwards our little band joined in the celebration of the Saviour's dying love.

Due to limitations of space we cannot here tell of the work of the mission in detail—that would require a volume. We must be content to follow in brief the progress which, slow at first, finally reached the entire Cherokee Nation in North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia.

<sup>18</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, VII, p. 301; VIII, pp. 271f.

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Before many years Mr. Jones in his preaching had the assistance of Indian converts, most notable of whom were the two able and powerful chiefs, Kaneeda and Jesse Bushyhead. Kaneeda was a full-blooded Cherokee, who surrendered his strong savage heart to the Saviour only after a year of struggle, on June 17, 1829. It is no wonder that, as Mr. Jones records,<sup>19</sup> a thrill of joy and wonder ran through the congregation as he and his wife, both already advanced in years, related their experience and asked for baptism. He began to preach almost immediately and was ordained. On June 10, 1833, this same Kaneeda, now called John Wickliffe, administered the ordinance of baptism to seven. Of this Mr. Jones says:<sup>20</sup>

I know that you would have been highly gratified to witness this Christian ordinance administered for the first time, by the first full Cherokee that ever laid believing penitents in the Saviour's liquid grave. His whole soul seemed to be absorbed in the great things represented by this sacrament.

Jesse Bushyhead at the time of his conversion lived some seventy-five miles from Valley Towns in Tennessee, and was a man of no ordinary ability and influence. He had considerable white blood in his veins, having been born during the War of Revolution, the son of a British officer, and could read and write both the language of the white man and the Indian. Being converted in 1831 he came the next year to Valley Towns where he was soon ordained to the ministry, and was to prove the ablest of all the native workers. He was one of the trusted negotiators of his nation with the national government, and had been summoned to St. Augustine, Florida, to assist in the negotiations with the Seminole Indians, where he met and greatly admired the Indian Osceola, a man of much the same qualities as Bushyhead.

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<sup>19</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, IX, p. 321.

<sup>20</sup> *American Baptist Magazine*, XIII, p. 358.



## POSEY AND THE CHEROKEE MISSION

Though other white workers and preachers and teachers, men and women, were sent by the Board to Mr. Jones's assistance, it was these Indians that were his chief helpers. From 1829 until the removal of the Cherokees in 1838, there was one continuous revival in the Cherokee nation. Almost every letter of Mr. Jones reports baptisms, sometimes ten on each of three successive Sundays, sometimes thirty-six on one Sunday, until on the eve of their departure for their new homes sixty-five baptisms are reported in one letter. As the interest increased, Mr. Jones and his helpers found it necessary to make frequent missionary journeys through the nation to carry the gospel to the eager people. There is hardly a stream that flows from the mountains of that section but has been the scene of baptisms of Cherokees of all ages, strong men and women in the prime of life, and children, and men and women more than eighty years of age—children, parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, all turning to the Lord with joy unspeakable and being baptized in the streams of their native mountains. Many are the stories of men and women walking twenty miles or more to hear the gospel or to be baptized.

And let no scoffer imagine that these Indians were not faithful followers of their Lord. The well attested fact is that their religion transformed their lives. Hardly an Indian could be found who was false to his profession. He that was a drunkard before became sober, he that was reckless and savage became gentle and kind; he that was morose before became cheerful and full of hope; they were new men and women in Christ Jesus. In writing of them the missionaries often break out in Scripture quotations of thankfulness.

Only one thing further, and that is to tell of staunchness and fortitude of these Christian Indians in abiding by their faith when they were torn from their mountain homes and transported beyond the Mississippi after a series of frauds and broken treaties by the United States government, which

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

are among the most cruel and shameful acts of our national government in that "Century of Dishonor," of which Helen Hunt Jackson tells.<sup>21</sup> Suffice it to say, however, that President Andrew Jackson, who is sometimes praised for preventing nullification in South Carolina, did not lift his hand to prevent the State of Georgia from nullifying the treaties made under the Constitution, and did nothing to uphold the decision of the Supreme Court that Georgia had no jurisdiction in the territory of the Cherokee nation. The United States Senate and President Jackson made a unilateral treaty under which the Cherokees were forced to leave the homes of their fathers. After some delays gained by parleying with the gentler President Van Buren, the 16,000 Cherokee Indians in North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama were hunted in their mountain homes by the army of General Winfield Scott, and were forced to leave in the summer and fall of 1838. It was a time of gloom and sorrow with many of them. Many of the old men died in prospect of the removal.

One striking thing is that in all the cruelty and ill treatment that accompanied the removal, the Christian Indians did not abate, but rather increased in their faithfulness. This account of some of the cruelties practiced illustrates that they did have great temptation to despair:<sup>22</sup>

Camp Hetzel, Near Cleveland, June 16. The Cherokees are nearly all prisoners. They have been dragged from their houses, and encamped at the forts and military posts, all over the nation. In Georgia especially multitudes were allowed no time to take anything with them except the clothes they had on. Well furnished houses were left a prey to plunderers, who like hungry wolves follow in the train of the captors. These wretches rifle the houses and strip the helpless, unoffending owners of all they have on earth. Females, who have been habituated to comforts and comparative affluence

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<sup>21</sup> Limitations of space prevent me from further pursuing the matter here, but the interested may find it treated fully and impartially in the scholarly paper of Mr. Charles C. Royce in the fifth annual *Report of the American Bureau of Ethnology*.

<sup>22</sup> *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XVIII, p. 236 f.

## POSEY AND THE CHEROKEE MISSION

are driven on foot before the bayonets of brutal men. Their feelings are mortified by vulgar and profane vociferations. . . . The poor captive in a state of distressing agitation, his weeping wife almost frantic with terror, surrounded by a group of crying, terrified children, without a friend to speak a consoling word, is in a poor condition to make a good disposition of his property and is in most cases stripped of it all by one blow. . . . All this is not a description of extreme cases. It is a faint representation of the work which has been perpetrated on the unoffending, unarmed and unresisting Cherokees.

We may wonder how the poor Cherokee Christians kept their faith amid such trials, but they did. The leaders on whom so much depended were faithful and they kept the people faithful. Old John Wickliffe and another Indian preacher from Valley Towns fell into Fort Butler, seven miles from the mission, and began to preach. Soon they had made ten converts, five of each sex, and went down to the river and baptized them, being guarded to the river and back. But those who witnessed the baptism declared it the most solemn and impressive religious service they ever witnessed.

Evan Jones and Jesse Bushyhead also remained faithful. Nearly all of the other missionaries gave up in despair. Not so Mr. Jones; he remained with the beloved Cherokees, and he and Bushyhead were given the conducting of one group each of the Cherokees to their new home when, after being driven from their homes by the soldiers of General Winfield Scott, they agreed to go of their own accord. In all the detachments, says Mr. Jones, the Christians were pretty generally distributed and these Christians maintained among themselves the stated worship of God in the sight of their pagan brethren, and of the white brethren who guarded them. Thus they took up their long journey—children, mothers, strong men, with faces turned to the west towards their new home that they had never seen. We catch sight of Mr. Jones' detachment at Nashville, where they were kindly treated, and near the Mississippi on their seventy-

## NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS

fifth day of the journey to their new home in what is now Oklahoma.<sup>23</sup> It was the Christians, says Mr. Jones, who showed the most fortitude and stood the journey best. Arrived at their new reservation they did not forget God, but established a new Valley Towns like unto the old wherein God was worshipped. With Mr. Jones and Bushyhead for their ministers they set about the work of evangelization with unabated zeal. Mr. Jones remained with them twenty-four years longer, and then retired to Kansas.

However, not all Indians in the section went west. A great many escaped from the soldiers of General Scott and hid in the mountains. Years afterward, having been helped by Humphrey Posey, they secured the Cherokee reservation where today they have a Baptist association of their own.

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<sup>23</sup> *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, XIX, pp. 64, 89.



## APPENDIX

The earliest historical list of North Carolina Baptists is that found in Morgan Edwards' *Materials towards a History of the Baptists in the Province of North Carolina*, and left in manuscript form by him. Edwards gives as his date 1772. His list, as first published in the *North Carolina Historical Review*, July, 1930, p. 394f., is reproduced in Section I below.

In the several editions of Asplund's *Baptist Register*, the Baptist churches of America are listed by states and counties. Much the most complete edition is the fifth, "arranged for November 1793," but published in 1794. The portion of that edition which relates to North Carolina is given in Section II below.

In Section III is given a map showing the associations in 1952 in the area of North Carolina discussed in this volume. The map is taken from the *North Carolina Baptist Annual* for 1952.

## APPENDIX

## SECTION I

From Morgan Edwards' *Materials*

Hitherto we have treated the norcarolina-baptists under several distinctions. In the following table the distinctions are dropped, and their present state exhibited in one point of view. The churches and ordained ministers in roman characters; the branches and unordained ministers in italic; the letters r, s, a, t, denote regular, arminian, separate, tunkers.

| <i>Churches and Branches</i> | <i>Ministers &amp; Assistants</i> | <i>When Constituted</i> | <i>From Newburn</i> | <i>Mem.</i> | <i>Fam.</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Hitchcock (r)                | Henry Easterline                  | Mar. 28, 1772           | 200 WbS             | 14          | 28          |
| Quehuky (r)                  | William Burgess                   | Dec. 11, 1755           | 120 NW              | 115         | 150         |
| {Tar-river-falls (r)         | John Moore                        | Dec. 3, 1757            | 110 NW              | 64          | 100         |
| { <i>Swifts-creek</i>        | <i>John Tanner</i>                |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Fishing-creek (r)           | William Walker                    | Dec. 6, 1755            | 150 NW              | 250         | 500         |
| { <i>Benefields-creek</i>    |                                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| { <i>Sandy-creek</i>         |                                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| { <i>Giles's-creek</i>       |                                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Lower-fishing-creek (r)     | Charles Daniel                    | Oct. 13, 1756           | 120 NW              | 74          | 350         |
| { <i>Swifts-creek</i>        | <i>William Powell</i>             |                         |                     |             |             |
| { <i>Rocky-swamp</i>         |                                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Pasquotank (r)              | Henry Abbot                       |                         |                     | 172         | 300         |
| {                            | <i>James Gamel</i>                |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Bartee (r)                  | James Abbingdon                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Tosneot (r)                 | Jonathan Thomas                   |                         |                     |             |             |
| {Tar-river (r)               | Henry Ledbetter                   | Apr. 3, 1761            | 165 NW              | 42          | 56          |
| { <i>Flatriver</i>           |                                   |                         |                     |             |             |

|                    |                          |               |         |         |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------|---------|
| Redbanks (r)       | Jeremy Ream              |               |         |         |
| Great-cohara (r)   | Edward Brown             |               |         |         |
| Three-creeks (r)   |                          |               |         |         |
| Bladen-county (r)  | Steph. Hollingsworth     |               |         |         |
| Bear Creek (r)     | George Graham            |               |         |         |
| Swifts-creek (r)   | Joseph Willis            |               |         |         |
| Sandy-creek (s)    |                          | Nov. 22, 1755 | 250 NW  | 14 40   |
|                    | <i>Tiden Lane</i>        |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>James Billingsley</i> |               |         |         |
| Little-river (s)   |                          |               |         |         |
| Rocky-river        | <i>John Bullin</i>       |               |         |         |
| Jones's-creek      | <i>Edmund Lilly</i>      |               |         |         |
| Mountain-run       |                          |               |         |         |
| Shallowfords (s)   | Joseph Morphy            |               |         |         |
| Forks of the Atkin | <i>David Allen</i>       | 1769          | 300 W   | 185 350 |
| Mulberry-fields    | John Cates               |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>David Chapman</i>     |               |         |         |
|                    | Elnathan Davis           |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>Thomas Brown</i>      |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>Nathaniel Powell</i>  |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>James Steward</i>     |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>John Robins</i>       |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>Drury Sims</i>        |               |         |         |
|                    | <i>George Williams</i>   |               |         |         |
|                    | Ezekiel Hunter           | Oct. 1764     | 190 WbS | 198 310 |
| Newriver (s)       |                          |               |         |         |

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\* New River in this place is clearly a mistake for Haw River.

## APPENDIX

| <i>Churches and Branches</i>     | <i>Ministers &amp; Assistants</i> | <i>When Con-<br/>stituted</i> | <i>From<br/>Newburn</i> | <i>Mem.</i>            | <i>Fam.</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Southwest (s)                    | Charles Markland                  |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Grassy-creek (s)                 | James Reed                        |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Lockwoods folly (s)              | ..... Guess                       |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Trent (s)                        | James McDonald                    |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Catawba (t)                      | Sam. Saunders                     | 1742                          |                         | 30                     | 40          |
| Atkin (t)                        | Conrad Kearn                      |                               |                         | 29                     | 40          |
| Ewarry (t)                       | Jacob Studeman                    |                               |                         | 30                     | 19          |
| Contantony (a)                   | Joseph Parker                     |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Matchipungo (a)                  | Wm Fulsher                        |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Meherin (a)                      | Wm Parker                         |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Bear-river (a)                   | Wingfield                         |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Newse                            | Joshua Herron                     |                               |                         |                        |             |
| Churches, 32.<br>family) 39,750. | Ordained ministers, 30.           | Members, 3,591.               | Families, 7,950.        | Souls (allowing 5 to a |             |



## SECTION II

From Asplund's *Register*

## EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR THIS REGISTER

Arranged for November, 1793

I have endeavoured to make this Register as plain and concise as possible, have therefore tried to avoid marks of significations, and words of abbreviations; and that it may be better understood, these following observations may suffice.

The States are arranged from north to south.

In the first column, are, 1st. inserted in Roman capitals the Counties in which the churches lie, in alphabetical order for each State;\* and 2dly, The names of the churches in small Roman, in alphabetical order for each County.

In the second column, are inserted in Italic letters, to what association each church belongs.

In the third column, are the ages of each church, or the year when they were constituted, or re-constituted.

In the fourth column, are noticed, all the preachers' names in each church, viz. all ordained ministers in small Roman characters: the itinerants, or helps, are distinguished with an \*, the candidates are in Italic letters; and if any preachers live above 25 miles from their churches, they are noticed in the foot of the page; they are always inserted, where their membership is, though they may live at a distance from their church; where I could not find the membership of a preacher, they are inserted at the nearest church where they live; and in that case, within Parenthesis's (). If any preacher has left off exercising his Function for old age, infirmity, or other reasons, he is noticed in the foot of the page.

In the fifth column are inserted the number of members for 1790. In the sixth for 1791. In the seventh for 1792, and in the eighth for 1793. These accounts were received each year, at the setting of the associations to which the several churches belong, (which may be seen in the Schedule) and as for the churches who do not belong to any associations, their accounts were taken at the setting of the adjacent, or nearest association.

A distinct Register, is kept for every Communion of the Baptist, the Negro and Indian churches.†

The ministering brethren who have gone through classical education, or, for their abilities and usefulness have received a title of

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\* Where a church lies in two townships, counties, states, or more, the church is inserted where the meeting-house is, or the Lord's Supper administered.

† The Negro and Indian preachers are not inserted, only those who are ordained.

## APPENDIX

honour, or diploma granted to them, are noticed, viz. A. B. (*Artiam Bachelaurus*) the first degree at college, Bachelor of Arts. A. M. (*Artiam Magister*) the second degree, Master of Arts, (upon application) is granted to all A. B. the third year who continue to be studious. D. D. (*Doctor Divinitatis*) Doctor or Teacher in Divinity, the third or highest degree of honour.

## PARTICULAR BAPTISTS IN NORTH-CAROLINA.

## STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

| ANSON              |                   |      |                         |     |     |
|--------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| Beaverdam          | <i>Charleston</i> | 1790 | Charles Cook            | 32  | 41  |
| Pee-Dee River      | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i>  | 1785 | <i>Daniel Gould</i> (a) | 110 | 110 |
| BEAUFORT           |                   |      |                         |     | 49  |
| Durham's Creek     | <i>Kekukee</i>    | 1790 | John Respass            | 13  | 23  |
| BERTIE             | <i>ditto</i>      | 1771 | Wil. Dargan* (b)        |     |     |
| Cushie-River       |                   |      | <i>Aaron Spivey</i>     | 43  | 50  |
|                    | <i>do.</i>        | 1773 | Lemuel Burkitt          | 237 | 230 |
|                    |                   |      | Geo. Northam*           |     | 46  |
|                    |                   |      | <i>Amos Harrell</i>     |     | 200 |
|                    |                   |      | <i>James Grover</i>     |     |     |
|                    |                   |      | <i>James Vinson</i>     |     |     |
|                    |                   |      | <i>James Rutland</i>    |     |     |
| Wickicoan-Creek    | <i>do.</i>        | 1789 | Robert Hendry           | 137 | 120 |
|                    |                   |      | <i>John Cake</i>        |     | 125 |
| BRUNSWICK          |                   |      |                         |     |     |
| Lockwood's-Folly   | <i>do.</i>        | 1779 | <i>John Bassant</i>     | 30  | 24  |
|                    |                   |      | <i>John Chesler</i>     |     |     |
| BUNCOMBE           |                   |      |                         |     |     |
| French Broad River | <i>Bethel</i>     | 1791 | Richard Newport         | 16  | 18  |
|                    |                   |      |                         |     | 28  |

(a) Resigned his Ordination, according to the Rule of the Association.

(b) Living now on Rocky River, Anson County.

# APPENDIX

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|                                  |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|---|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Catawbo-River                    | <i>Yadkin</i>            | 1785         | Cleveland Coffey<br><i>Rich. Osgatharp(?)</i><br><i>Ralph Cobbs</i> | 159 | 165 | 159 | 150      |
| CABARRUS                         |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
| Coldwater-Creek                  | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i>         | 1790         | John Culpepper  | 40  | 40  | 42  | 45       |
| CAMDEN                           |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
| Camden                           | <i>Kehukey</i>           | 1757         | David Biggs<br><i>David Duncan</i>                                  | 80  | 86  | 86  | 86       |
| Sawyer's Creek                   | <i>ditto</i>             | 1790         | Thom. Etheridge   | 52  | 52  | 48  | 49       |
| CARTERET                         |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
| Hadnot's-Creek                   | <i>do.</i>               | 1789         | James Saunders  | 35  | 35  | 60  | 60       |
| Newport-River                    | <i>do.</i>               | 1778         | John McKane<br>Robert Simpson*                                      | 86  | 105 | 41  | 43       |
| CASWELL                          |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
| Island Ford on Dan R.            | <i>Roanoke</i>           | 1790         |   | 34  | 36  | 36  | 36       |
| Lick Fork on Hogan's<br>River    | <i>ditto</i>             | 1792         | Barzillai Graves*<br>Richard Martin*                                |     | 71  | 74  | 79       |
| N. Country-Line<br>Hogan's River | <i>do.</i><br><i>do.</i> | 1772<br>1793 | Thomas Mullins<br>Joseph Bush*                                      | 160 | 112 | 113 | 50<br>54 |
| CHATHAM                          |                          |              |   |     |     |     |          |
| Bear-Creek                       | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i>         | 1786         | Sherwood White<br><i>Isaac Teague</i>                               | 55  | 55  | 57  | 60       |
| Haw-River                        | <i>do.</i>               | 1763         | Elnathan Davies<br><i>Thomas Brown</i>                              | 320 | 325 | 320 | 330      |



|                  |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
|------------------|----------------|------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Rocky-River      | <i>do.</i>     | 1776 | <i>Jesse Buckner</i>     |     |     |     |     |
| CHOWAN           |                |      | <i>Lewis Cordial</i> (a) |     | 45  | 45  | 45  |
| Ballard's Bridge | <i>Kelukee</i> | 1781 | <i>Isaac Hailles</i>     |     |     |     |     |
| Yoppim-River     | <i>do.</i>     | 1775 | <i>Thomas Cate</i>       |     |     |     |     |
|                  |                |      | <i>W. Weatherspoon</i>   |     |     |     |     |
|                  |                |      | <i>Francis Dorset</i>    | 60  | 65  | 60  | 63  |
|                  |                |      | <i>John McCabe</i>       | 60  | 65  | 71  | 132 |
|                  |                |      | <i>John Asplund</i>      |     |     |     |     |
|                  |                |      | <i>Thomas Harmon</i>     |     |     |     |     |
|                  |                |      | <i>Stacy</i>             |     |     |     |     |
| CRAVEN           |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Coor-Creek       | <i>do.</i>     | 1791 | <i>Joel Willis</i>       |     | 51  | 48  | 44  |
| Goose-Creek      | <i>do.</i>     | 1784 | <i>James Brinson</i>     | 162 | 120 | 75  | 75  |
| Swift-Creek      | <i>do.</i>     | 1784 | <i>William Phipps</i>    | 106 | 109 | 65  | 48  |
|                  |                |      | <i>Thomas Willis</i>     |     |     |     |     |
|                  |                |      | <i>Richard Willis</i>    |     |     |     |     |
| CUMBERLAND       |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Stony-Creek      | <i>do.</i>     | 1787 | <i>William Taylor</i>    | 150 | 140 | 145 | 150 |
|                  |                |      | <i>Aaron Moore</i>       |     |     |     |     |
| CURRITUCK        |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Cowenjock        | <i>do.</i>     | 1780 | <i>Jonath. Barns</i> (b) | 65  | 65  | 49  | 50  |
|                  |                |      | <i>William Lurry</i>     | 35  | 35  | 37  | 40  |
| Powel's Point    |                | 1787 |                          |     |     |     |     |

(a) Living now at Great Cohara, Sampson County.

(b) Born blind.

# APPENDIX

|     |                      |      |  |     |     |     |
|-----|----------------------|------|--|-----|-----|-----|
| 564 | DUPLIN               | 1791 | Francis Oliver<br><i>Lewis Thomas</i>  | 75  | 89  | 100 |
|     | Bear-Swamp           |      | <i>Amos Johnson</i>                    |     |     |     |
|     | Bulltail-Swamp       | 1756 | William Cooper<br><i>John Stainton</i> | 94  | 91  | 105 |
|     | Muddy-Creek          | 1792 | Job Thigpen                            |     | 32  | 32  |
|     | EDGECOMBE            |      |  |     |     |     |
|     | Tosnot-Creek         | 1756 | Reuben Hayes                           | 40  | 40  | 40  |
|     | Town-Creek           | 1780 | Joshua Barnes                          | 57  | 55  | 54  |
|     | FRANKLIN             |      |  |     |     |     |
|     | Jailes's Creek       | 1771 | Jose. Williams*                        | 80  | 40  | 30  |
|     | Maple Spring         | 1793 | Will. Lancaster<br>Henry Hunt*         |     |     | 45  |
|     | Sandy Creek          | 1770 |  | 142 | 72  | 48  |
|     | GLASGOW              |      |  |     |     |     |
|     | Lit. Contentney Riv. | 1791 |  | 60  | 64  | 62  |
|     | GRANVILLE            |      |  |     |     |     |
|     | Grassey-Creek        | 1762 | Thomas Vass<br><i>Will Richards</i>    | 140 | 148 | 152 |
|     | Tab's Creek          | 1775 | Josiah Rucks*                          | 40  | 38  | 39  |
|     | Tar River            | 1789 | John Marshall                          | 36  | 42  | 42  |
|     | GUILFORD             |      |  |     |     |     |
|     | Cross Roads          | 1786 | John Tatum<br><i>Nathan Tatum</i>      | 20  | 19  | 20  |

|                    |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
|--------------------|----------------|------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|-----|
| HALIFAX            |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
| Fishing Creek      | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1755 | Joshua White<br><i>Hezekiah Morris</i><br><i>Holloway Morris</i>  | 80  | 67  | 65  | 65  |  | 65  |
| Kehukee-Creek      | <i>ditto</i>   | 1755 | <i>Will. Vaughan</i>  | 23  | 19  | 33  | 34  |  | 34  |
| Rocky-Swamp        | <i>ditto</i>   | 1774 | Jesse Reed<br><i>Macolister Vinson</i><br><i>Peter Quales</i><br><i>John Stephens (a)</i><br><i>(John Hervey)</i> | 134 | 135 | 135 | 132 |  | 132 |
| HIDE               |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
| Mattemuskeet River | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1783 | John Bray<br><i>John W. Caracon</i><br><i>Zephan. Sawyer</i>  | 65  | 61  | 64  | 66  |  | 66  |
| IREDILL            |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
| Grassy-Nob         | <i>Yadkin</i>  | 1789 | Laz. Whitehead  | 65  | 83  | 88  | 42  |  | 42  |
| JONES              |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
| Trent-River        | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1761 | John Dillahunty<br><i>Abraham Little</i><br><i>John Coontz</i>  | 53  | 70  | 67  | 73  |  | 73  |
| LENOIR             |                |      |   |     |     |     |     |  |     |
| Bear-Creek         | <i>ditto</i>   | 1790 | Lewis Whitfield<br>Abram Baker*<br>Isaac Totewine*<br>John Herring*(b)<br><i>Nathan Byrd</i>                      | 67  | 72  | 77  | 83  |  | 83  |

(a) Living in South-Carolina.

(b) Formerly Pastor here, living now in Bladen County.

# APPENDIX

|           |  |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|-----------|--|-------------------|------|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| 57<br>366 | MARTIN                                     |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|           | Skewarkey-Creek                            | <i>do.</i>        | 1787 | Martin Ross<br><i>Benjamin Ross</i>  | 121 | 42  | 46  | 42  |  |
|           | MONTGOMERY                                 |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|           | Little-River                               | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i>  | 1787 |  | 15  | 15  | 15  | 15  |  |
|           | Mouth of Hughwarry<br>River                | <i>do.</i>        | 1780 | Will. Megriger   | 44  | 46  | 53  | 56  |  |
|           | Rocky-Riv. P.D.R.                          | <i>do.</i>        | 1758 | Edmund Lilly<br><i>Will. Kindel (a)</i>  | 170 | 165 | 157 | 155 |  |
|           | 2d ditto                                   | <i>Charleston</i> | 1787 | Samuel Bond<br><i>Joel Rowland</i>   | 162 | 158 | 158 | 141 |  |
|           | NASH                                       |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|           | Falls of Tar-River                         | <i>Kehukee</i>    | 1757 | Imman. Skinner   | 83  | 84  | 78  | 77  |  |
|           | Poplar-Spring                              | <i>do.</i>        | 1793 |  |     |     |     | 62  |  |
|           | ONSLow                                     |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|           | New-River                                  | <i>do.</i>        | 1759 | Robert Nixon<br><i>Ketteril Mondine</i><br><i>John Wilkins</i><br><i>Rob. Courtney (b)</i> | 144 | 144 | 88  | 100 |  |
|           | ORANGE AND<br>CASWELL                      |                   |      |  |     |     |     |     |  |
|           | S. Country-Line, or<br>Waters of Haw-River | <i>Roanoke</i>    | 1783 | Joseph Dorris<br><i>Isaac Thompson</i><br><i>Daniel Bursora</i><br><i>Clifton Allen</i>    | 85  | 100 | 124 | 114 |  |

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(a) Resigned ordination according to the rule of the Association.  
 (b) Living in Claremont County, (S.C.)



|                    |                   |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PASQUOTANK         |                   |                |      | <i>James McCaleb</i>     |     |     |     |     |
|                    | Flatty-Creek      | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1790 | <i>Christopher Stacy</i> | 70  | 72  | 64  | 72  |
|                    | Knobs-Crook       | <i>ditto</i>   | 1786 |                          | 34  | 34  | 33  | 42  |
| PERSON             |                   |                |      | <i>Nathan Arnet</i>      |     |     |     |     |
| Head of Mayo Creek | <i>Roanoke</i>    |                | 1793 | <i>David Lawson</i>      |     |     |     | 62  |
| Flat-River         | <i>ditto</i>      |                | 1777 | <i>John Brooks</i>       |     |     |     |     |
| S. Hico-River, {   | <i>do.</i>        |                | 1792 | George Roberts           | 161 | 150 | 139 | 85  |
| Upper Church }     | <i>do.</i>        |                |      |                          |     |     | 67  | 64  |
| Lower ditto        |                   |                | 1793 |                          |     |     |     | 53  |
| PITT               |                   |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Flat-Swamp         | <i>Kehukee</i>    |                | 1776 | John Page                | 80  | 111 | 113 | 120 |
|                    |                   |                |      | <i>James Nowell</i>      |     |     |     |     |
| Redbanks           | <i>ditto</i>      |                | 1758 | Noah Tison               | 103 | 93  | 89  | 85  |
|                    |                   |                |      | John Vinson*             |     |     |     |     |
|                    |                   |                |      | Geo. Granberry*          |     |     |     |     |
| RANDOLPH           |                   |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Sandy-Creek        | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i>  |                | 1757 | <i>John Wellborne</i>    | 25  | 25  | 25  | 25  |
| ROBESON            |                   |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Saddle-tree-Swamp  | <i>Kehukee</i>    |                | 1788 | Jacob Tarver             | 53  | 58  | 70  | 80  |
|                    |                   |                |      | <i>Isham Pitman</i>      |     |     |     |     |
| ROCKINGHAM         |                   |                |      |                          |     |     |     |     |
| Haw-River          | <i>Roanoke</i>    |                | 1793 |                          |     |     |     | 18  |
| Matrimony Creek    | <i>Strawberr.</i> |                | 1780 | <i>John Harper</i>       | 28  | 30  | 33  | 35  |
| Wolf-Island        | <i>Roanoke</i>    |                | 1777 | Isaac Cantrill           | 30  | 32  | 39  | 39  |

## APPENDIX

|                      |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
|----------------------|------------------|------|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|--|
| ROWAN                |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Abbot's-Creek        | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i> | 1777 | George Pope              | 80  | 95  | 100 | 105 |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | <i>Christop. Vickery</i> |     |     |     |     |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | <i>Joseph Morriss</i>    |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Forks of Yadkin Riv. | <i>do.</i>       | 1793 | <i>Jesse Buckner</i>     |     |     |     | 45  |  |  |
| Jersey-Settlement    | <i>Yadkin</i>    | 1758 | Thomas Durham            | 37  | 45  | 60  | 60  |  |  |
| Timber-Ridge         | <i>ditto</i>     | 1788 | Peter Eaton              | 33  | 38  | 19  | 19  |  |  |
| Dutchman's Creek     | <i>do.</i>       | 1792 |                          |     |     | 25  | 27  |  |  |
| Bear-Creek           | <i>do.</i>       | 1791 | William Cook             |     | 77  | 68  | 68  |  |  |
| RUTHERFORD           |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Buffalow-Creek       | <i>Bethel</i>    | 1777 | Joseph Camp              | 60  | 73  | 69  | 69  |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | <i>William Wilkey</i>    |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Bill's Creek         | <i>ditto</i>     | 1782 |                          | 48  | 37  | 38  | 35  |  |  |
| Green-River          | <i>do.</i>       | 1778 | Daniel Brown             | 70  | 80  | 92  | 88  |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | <i>Edw. Williams</i>     |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Mountain-Creek       | <i>Bethel</i>    | 1789 | Permint. Morgan          | 31  | 60  | 106 | 114 |  |  |
| Sandy-Run            | <i>ditto</i>     | 1788 |                          | 80  | 80  | 92  | 88  |  |  |
| SAMPSON              |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Great Cohara Swamp   | <i>Kehukee</i>   | 1759 | Fleet Cooper             | 150 | 140 | 147 | 137 |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | <i>Timoth. Williams</i>  |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| STOKES               |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Belew's-Creek        | <i>Strawbery</i> | 1781 | <i>John Wells</i>        | 50  | 50  | 50  | 50  |  |  |
| Soapstone-Creek      | <i>ditto</i>     | 1779 | John Newman              | 170 | 170 | 170 | 170 |  |  |
|                      |                  |      | George Dodson*           |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| SURRY                |                  |      |                          |     |     |     |     |  |  |
| Deep-Creek           | <i>Sandy-Cr.</i> | 1777 | Joseph Murphey           | 25  | 25  | 25  | 25  |  |  |

|                     |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Hunting-Creek       | <i>Yadkin</i>  | 1781         | William Petty                              | 203       | 105       | 105       | 105       |
| Little Yadkin-River | <i>ditto</i>   | 1785         | <i>Ninian Rily</i><br>John Stone           | 40        | 43        | 43        | 46        |
| TYRREL              |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| Morratuck-Creek     | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1791         |  |           | 37        | 42        | 41        |
| Scuppernong-River   | <i>ditto</i>   | 1785         | Ameriah Biggs<br>Nathan Gilbert*           | 28        | 33        | 33        | 56        |
| South Lancaster     | <i>do.</i>     | 1793         |  |           |           |           | 25        |
| WAKE                |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| New-Light M. H.     | <i>Roanoke</i> | 1775         | James Hefferlin<br><i>James Weathers</i>   | 150       | 150       | 155       | 160       |
| Cross-Roads         | <i>Kehukee</i> | 1792         | Zadoc Bell*                                |           |           | 39        | 41        |
| Swift-Creek         | <i>ditto</i>   | 1757         | John Moore, jun.                           | 86        | 105       | 114       | 106       |
| WARREN              |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| Mill-Pond           |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| Reedy-Creek         | <i>do.</i>     | 1774<br>1755 | Thomas Gardner<br>Lewis Moore              | 110<br>70 | 120<br>68 | 120<br>62 | 125<br>60 |
| WAYNE               |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| Falling-Creek       | <i>do.</i>     | 1778         |  | 212       | 72        | 72        | 126       |
| Black-Creek         | <i>do.</i>     | 1783         | <i>Ephraim Daniel</i><br><i>John Gully</i> | 40        | 35        | 32        | 31        |
| Norhanty-Swamp      | <i>do.</i>     | 1789         | John Thompson<br><i>William Taylor</i>     | 44        | 47        | 44        | 46        |
| WILKS               |                |              |  |           |           |           |           |
| Beaver-Creek        | <i>Yadkin</i>  | 1779         | John Barlow                                | 30        | 37        | 42        | 59        |
| Brier-Creek         | <i>Yadkin</i>  | 1781         | George McNiel<br>Andrew Baker*             | 150       | 180       | 210       | 220       |

# APPENDIX

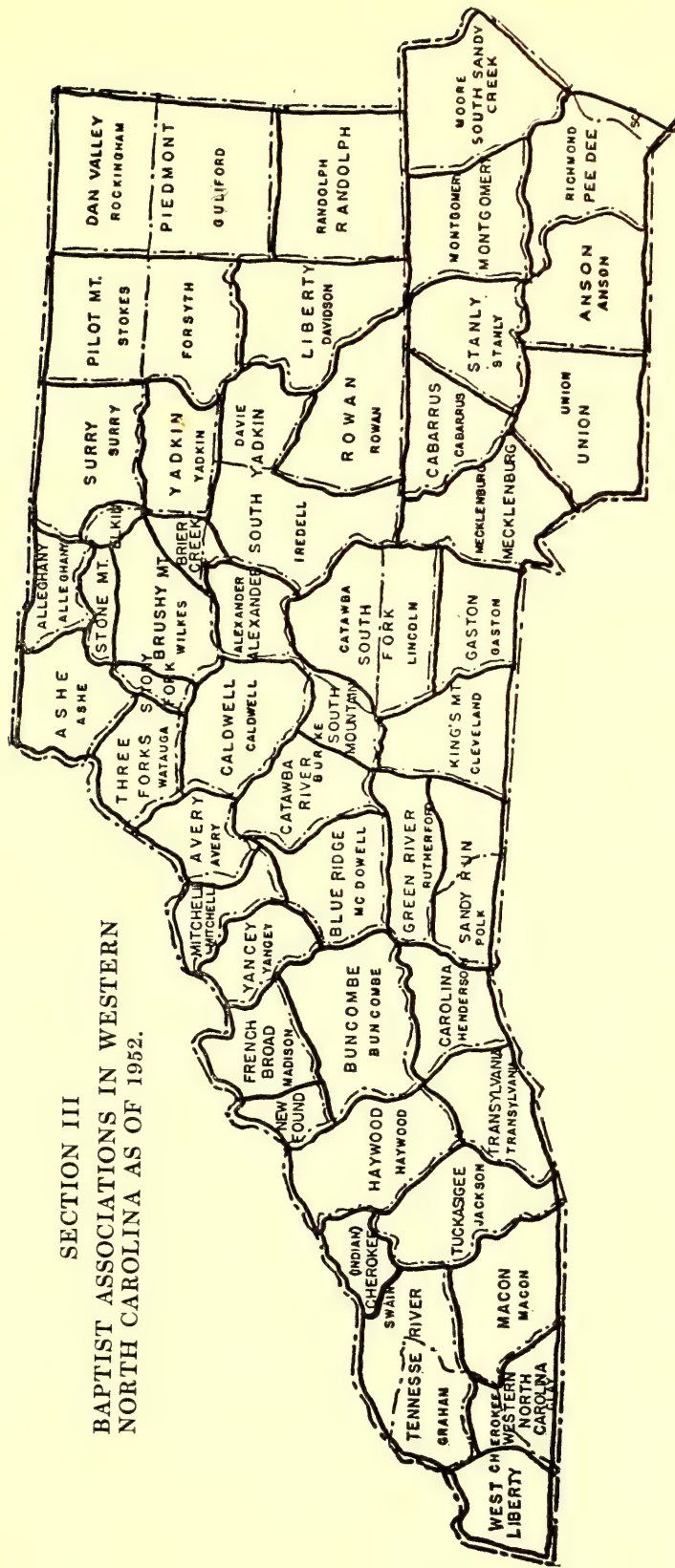
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|                      |            |      |                       |     |     |     |     |
|----------------------|------------|------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Fish's-River         | <i>do.</i> | 1789 | Moses Foley*          | 27  | 30  | 32  | 33  |
| Little-River         | <i>do.</i> | 1791 |                       |     | 20  | 20  | 20  |
| New-Riv. three forks | <i>do.</i> | 1791 | James Chambers        |     | 30  | 32  | 32  |
|                      |            |      | <i>James Thomkins</i> |     |     |     |     |
| New-River, N. Fork   | <i>do.</i> | 1781 |                       | 15  | 15  | 40  | 40  |
| Roaring-River        | <i>do.</i> | 1779 | John Turner           | 33  | 30  | 26  | 30  |
| Ditto, S. Fork       | <i>do.</i> | 1785 | Will. Hammond         | 100 | 127 | 147 | 150 |
|                      |            |      | <i>William Morgan</i> |     |     |     |     |
| Yadkin-River, Head   | <i>do.</i> | 1779 |                       | 63  | 40  | 30  | 30  |



# SECTION III

## BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA AS OF 1952.





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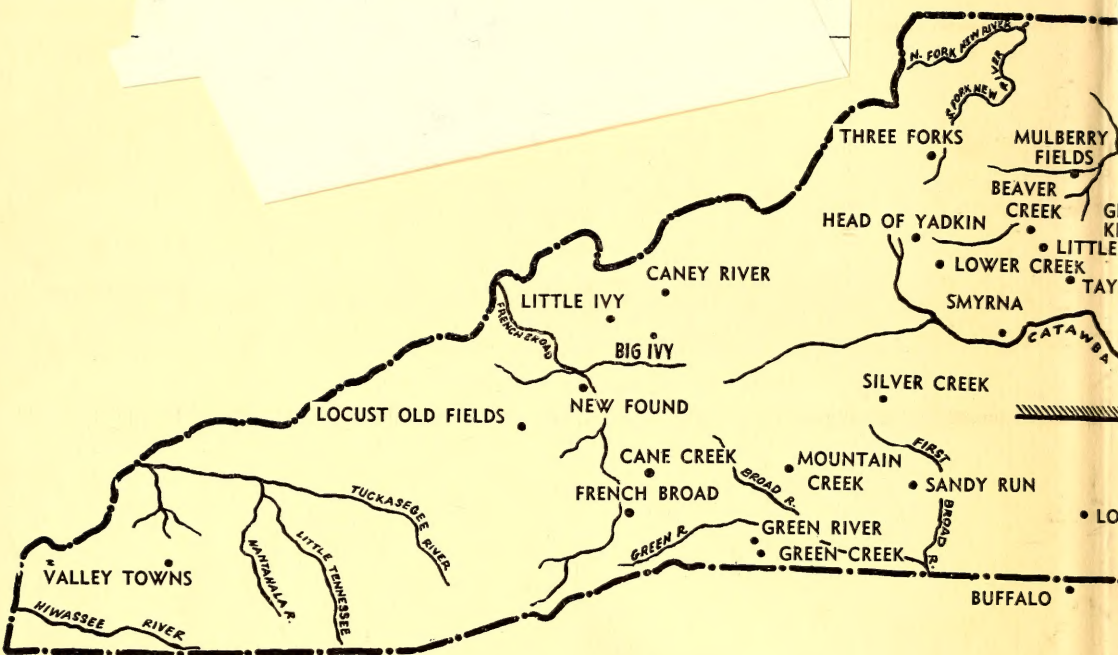






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## EARLY BAPTIST CHURCHES IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

County lines shown as of 1760

Most of the churches shown were organized after 1760.  
Area north of shaded line was Granville Tract.





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